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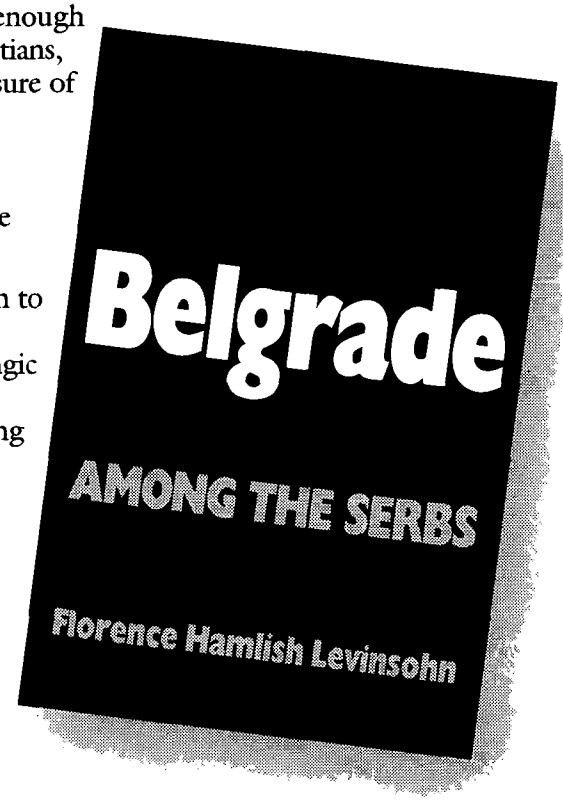

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DISSENT (ISSN 0012–3846), issued October 1994, is published quarterly, winter, spring, summer, and fall, by the Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas, Inc., 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Subscriptions: $22.00 for one year; $40.00 for two years; $15.00 for students for one year; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, add $7.00 for mailing costs per year; institutional rate $30.00 per year, $50.00 for two years, single copy $7.50. All payments from foreign countries must be made by United States money orders or checks payable in United States currency. For special rates on bulk orders from organizations, teachers, etc., write directly to DISSENT. For information on newsstand and bookstore distribution write to: Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 1130 Cleveland Road, Sandusky, Ohio 44870; phone: 1-800-221-3148.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Dissent*, 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

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Front cover design by Robert Schwartz. *Dissent* is indexed in *Academic Abstracts*, the Infotrak Academic Index, *Magazine Article Summaries*, the *PAIS Bullentin*, University Microfilms, Inc. (UMI), the *Social Sciences Index*, and the *Social Science Source*.

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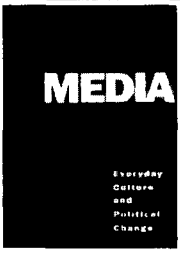

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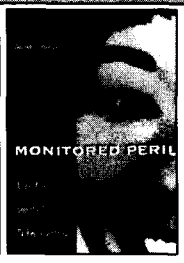

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Editor's Page

About a week before Arafat, I visited Jericho to see how "the autonomy" (as my Israeli friends call it) was faring. It was, that week, faring well. The city, bedecked in Palestinian flags, was quiet; the old police and new security forces seemed to be effective and, for the moment, popular; the joint Israeli-Palestinian patrols were the surprising success story of the autonomy's first stage. The one sign of future trouble was that every official I met came from outside, from Tunis, Lebanon, or Iraq; the locals seem to have been displaced—though perhaps they have only retreated into temporary invisibility. In any case, the new civil administration was not yet at work, and elections were still months away, on the most optimistic schedule. Virtually everything remains to be done; still, there I was, walking peacefully around a square in . . . Palestine.

This is peacemaking on the ground, and though it can turn very sour very fast, it is a remarkable achievement—made possible, we should remember, by the victory of the Israeli left in a democratic vote two years ago. But this close link between democracy and peace is by no means guaranteed. Labor could have lost the last election, could still lose the next one. Jericho was a popular festival but probably not a budding democracy. In countries like Serbia and Croatia, nationalist politicians with maximal programs easily win elections and fight wars. And in much of the world, civil war and anarchy, desperate poverty and famine, masses of people in flight make any kind of democratic politics impossible. Democracy remains, should remain, the central goal of the left, but insofar as we think about state policy, we need to lower our sights. What is necessary today is minimal decency: peace on the ground if not in the heart, subsistence and shelter, security for minority populations.

The most striking truth about international society today, and especially about its most powerful grouping, the West European/North Atlantic states, is the absence of the capacity and the will (which one, really?) to work effectively for minimal decency. In this issue of *Dissent*, we focus on American foreign policy (but the same questions arise for the Europeans: Daniel Bell's "Future of Europe" suggests the difficulties they are likely to have answering them). We lead off with a programmatic statement by Stanley Hoffmann, to which we asked eight editors, contributors, and friends, whose views range fairly widely, to respond. The central issues have to do with intervention in civil wars and "failed states" and with the U.S. role in the global economy.

A separate article by Charles Knight opens an argument much neglected by the left (not only by *Dissent*): what sort of military organization and budget should leftists defend? The question assumes that the answer is: *some sort*. Eighty-four years ago, Jean Jaurès, who had no trouble with the assumption, answered this question in his *L'armée nouvelle*. But in the cold war years, serious arguments about military matters were virtually forbidden. The field of strategic studies was foreign territory. Today, the readiness of people on the left (I had better be careful: some people) to call for military intervention in places like Bosnia or Haiti makes it a necessary topic again. I hope to have a long essay on intervention ready for the Winter issue—in which I will argue, with Knight, for its lasting necessity.

No doubt, a number of editors will want to disagree, and we will make room for them in later issues. As the arguments in these pages demonstrate—on foreign policy, European social democracy, markets and health care—we remain committed to a steady engagement with all the hard questions. —M.W. □

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Lisa Anderson

LIBERALISM, ISLAM, AND THE ARAB STATE

Why does the transition to liberal democratic politics present such intractable problems in the Arab world? Just as liberalism appeared to triumph in much of the rest of the world, most of the Arab world retreated from it. In the last five years there has been a subtle but palpable reversal of the 1980s trend toward a liberal politics. The most spectacular setback was the January 1992 military coup in Algeria that led to cancellation of the results of free and fair elections, suspension of Parliament, dismissal of the president, and what now looks like a low-grade civil war. Elsewhere, press censorship was tightened, as in Tunisia; elections more carefully manipulated, as in Egypt; and indeed, only poor Jordan seems to offer much hope to the proponents of liberalization.

What happened? The short answer is that after Islamist political movements began to avail themselves of the newly created political "spaces," the political elites changed their minds about allowing them (and therefore anyone else) freedom to speak and assemble. This presents us with a second question: why was it Islamists—rather than secular liberals, labor unions, or big business—who so quickly filled the space provided by political relaxation? Why are the Islamists so effective in advancing the cause of political opposition?

Perhaps the most common response, particularly in press and policy circles, is to attribute primacy to culture and tradition, concluding that there is something in Islam that disposes its adherents to set it above all other political affiliations. So we are told, for example, that "democracy is alien to the mind-set of Islam."[1] This approach has a long and distinguished pedigree. It seems to me, however, without gainsaying the fact that the vast majority of people in the Arab world are Muslims, we must ask why, at this historical moment, Islamic political sentiments and movements have taken precedence over other sentiments and movements—including some, such as secular nationalisms and labor movements, that have had considerable support in the recent past.

A second important argument gives great weight to state policy. Thus governments that supported ostensibly docile Islamists against left-wing political movements in the early 1970s are seen, particularly by those sympathetic to leftist positions, to be getting their just desserts. But if state policy is so powerful, why have subsequent state efforts to reverse its effects failed so dismally? Why can subtle support of Quranic study groups defeat the leftists while harsh repression fails to daunt the Islamists? Why have secular groups within civil society not been able to profit from similar support when they have gotten it?

Although culture and policy play important roles in fostering political affiliations and organization, I want to argue for the role of state institutions and structures in shaping political life. I will begin with a few general observations about the nature of the states of the Arab world. Most of these states are characterized by "soft budget constraints." In the days before independence, European rulers established extensive colonial state administra-

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tions, and the pattern then set of reliance on external infusions of funds to cover budget deficits persisted well after independence. The classic cases in the region are the oil producers, of course: high-capital, low-labor-intensity oil production has meant that very little local labor is required to maintain the flow of revenues to the state. But all the states of the Arab world, oil producers and non-oil producers alike, avail themselves of externally generated revenues. After independence, governments garnered windfalls from foreign exchange reserves that accumulated during the Second World War; from nationalizations of foreign-owned property immediately after independence; from the foreign aid they obtained as a result of the region's geostrategic location; and, during the 1980s, from foreign debt incurred, not in the private sector as in much of Latin America, but by the states themselves.

What difference does such a political economy make for the nature of these states and their societies? Historically, states have become beholden to their citizens through reciprocal obligation. Impersonal, formal, arbitrary state extraction—taxes and conscription, for example—was the first sign of government as penetration and control in the early modern nation state. It was soon followed by demands, particularly among property holders, for protection against such arbitrary exactions and for a role in deciding how state income was spent. These developments we now think of as the expansion of individual rights, democratic participation, and class politics. In extractive states, wealth translates into the capacity to pay taxes to, and demand concessions from, the government—that is, into political power.

In our "soft constraint" states, by contrast, the conventional relationship between purse strings and polity is reversed; the availability of external revenue releases governments from reliance on domestic taxes for a substantial component of their income. As a result, the governments are not subject to the ordinary obligation of domestic accountability. In fact, of course, there is taxation in the Arab world, but it is not equal to government expenditure. As the director of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Middle East department remarked in 1988, Egypt's government is like "an employee who earns 100 pounds a month, but spends 122."[2]

On what do the regimes spend their money? Apart from the rulers' personal enthusiasms, by and large, the regimes use their externally generated income to buy acquiescence in their rule. The governments of the Arab world provide generous consumer subsidies, education, health care, and other services to their people, becoming, in essence, pre-industrial welfare states. Despite the variety of the regimes, from monarchies to "socialist" single-party governments, they all proclaim their solicitude for ordinary folk without making significant demands upon or concessions to them.

It is this profile, the pre-industrial, non-extractive welfare state, to which I would attribute the characteristic patterns of political and social organization in the Arab world. But first, what are those patterns? A quick and unsystematic review of the literature on social organization and "civil society" in the Arab world is revealing: whether nonexistent or merely incoherent, independent associational life is not conventionally thought to characterize the Arab world. That doesn't mean, however, that there is no associational life at all.

The generous distributive policies of these governments have had both negative and positive effects, inhibiting certain kinds of organization and promoting other kinds. On the negative side of the balance sheet, these policies retarded the appearance of demands for participation in government decision making, breeding instead societies dependent upon the state for many of the necessities of modern life. In Egypt, there are 12,832 "voluntary social organizations" at work but,

> despite the fact that the number of civic associations and the diversity of their activities can often give a mistaken impression of effectiveness, reality shows that there exist substantial constraints on such organizations, the most important of which being the limitation of volunteers upon whom civic activity is founded.

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Such associations are also affected by a lack of financial resources and thus have to depend on the funds they receive from the Ministry of Social Affairs, which obviously affects their autonomy.[3]

In these rentier states, the relationship between power and wealth characteristic of the extractive state is reversed: here wealth derives from power. It is most effectively generated not through production but through close ties with the regulatory and distributive agencies of the state. Indeed, the "modern" or profitable sectors of the economy are often monopolized by the state itself. Where they are not, the private entrepreneurs are friends, clients, relatives of the ruler or even—as in Morocco, where the king is by far the largest property holder—the ruler himself. The largest construction magnate in Egypt married his son to Anwar al-Sadat's daughter; most of the very large Saudi royal family has private business interests; the people on the commanding heights of the Iraqi private sector are intermarried with the Takriti network that controls the regime.

Class or interest-group associations such as business or labor unions—organizations based on common positions within a productive process—are less effective in amassing wealth than are relations built on personal patronage and bureaucratic clientelism. From the perspective of appropriation, the usefulness of associations based on impersonal but common interests is markedly diminished, and labor unions and industrialists' syndicates have mostly been façades for other interests.

Equally important is the positive effect of the non-extractive welfare state, that is, the impact of distribution, or welfare politics, on the development of social division and conflict. Distributive policies not only discourage interest-based politics but foster political affiliations based on noneconomic identities. Where taxation is the most important economic relationship between state and society, different kinds of property ownership or control serve as markers of political interest and identity. Indeed, in important respects, class politics is a *result* of state extraction. By contrast, where distribution is the most significant economic link between government and people, the criteria by which goods and services are allocated become critical determinants of interest and identity. As Paul Starr has suggested, even in "the liberal state,"

> by virtue of their institutional use, official categories . . . become a framework of incentives. If a state organizes benefits around certain categories, those who can qualify may well adjust their self-descriptions and self-conceptions to fit the official ones.[4]

For a variety of reasons, including the dynamics of both patronage and "affirmative action," the criteria of distribution are often noneconomic. This elicits political organization based on common *identities*—often officially constructed and sanctioned—rather than common *interests*.

Most advanced industrial societies are now mixed economies, in which both extraction and distribution (or redistribution) take place. As a result, political groups reflect both interest and identity. So it is not surprising that the growth of the welfare state in the advanced industrial world brings with it the appearance of "new social movements." Where extraction predominates, class politics remains prevalent; where distribution predominates, as in the rentier state, identity politics eclipses other forms of organization.

What do identity-based movements look like? Jean Cohen provides us with a useful characterization:

> It is clearly part of the self-understanding of many feminists, ecologists, peace activists, and autonomists ["local autonomy movements"] that their identities, goals and modes of association are historically new. . . . Unlike the Old Left, actors involved in the contemporary movements do not view themselves in terms of a socio-economic class. . . . Contemporary actors abandon what they see as the "productivist" cultural model of the Old Left as well as its modes of organization. Instead of forming unions or political parties of the socialist, social democratic, or communist type, they focus on grass-roots politics and create horizontal, directly democratic associations that are loosely federated on national levels. Moreover, they target the social domain of civil society

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> rather than the economy or state, raising issues concerned with the democratization of structures of everyday life and focusing on forms of communication and collective identity.[5]

All this will be familiar to any student of the Islamist movements in the Arab world. Indeed, apart from the somewhat more political posture of some—though by no means all—of the movements, a feature itself dictated by the authoritarian political environments in which they operate, Cohen's description is a close fit. As, for example, Robert Bianchi put it,

> Their aim is not the rapid seizure of power to impose a theocratic order from above, but the steady transformation of values and behavior that will create a more Islamic society from below. Their multi-class following has made them an important force in their own right as well as a valuable coalition partner. . . .[6]

In the Arab world, the politics of the pre-industrial welfare states have diminished the significance of economic distinctions as bases for political identity. This accounts for the relative weakness of "old social movements" in the region, many of which atrophied as the welfare states grew in the 1950s and 1960s. The demise of the once vigorous Tunisian labor movement is the most poignant of many illustrations. Although associated with a period of economic liberalization, the crackdown on the labor movement in Tunisia in the late 1970s was predicated on the prior development of an elaborate social welfare system, making the union's demands on behalf of its members comparable to "special pleading."

Both supporters and foes of the regimes in the Arab world have been encouraged, sometimes by deliberate policy, sometimes as an unintended consequence of the criteria of distribution, to organize around noneconomic, familial, patronage, or identity-based commonalities. Many of the regimes permit and even foster personalistic ties as the principal mechanism through which the distribution of economic resources takes place. Thus the clients of Morocco's king, the residents of the Iraqi president's natal village, the members of the Qadhdhafa clan in Libya, the Alawi sect in Syria, the royal family in Saudi Arabia—all have enjoyed preferential access to government-controlled benefits.

It appears to be true in general, and it is certainly true of the Arab world, that interest-based movements are weakened by the welfare state, while the importance of identity-based movements is amplified. Whether or not the liberalizing regimes of the 1980s expected professional syndicates, labor unions, or liberal political parties to spring up and engage in decorous debate about sharing the burdens of structural adjustment, they certainly did not get anything like that. I think it is fair to say that the regimes expected precisely the weak and timorous responses they encountered among their "interested" constituencies. Not only is associational life relatively weak—a weakness all the more striking since the state itself is sufficiently organized and bureaucratized to provide elaborate welfare services—but organizers and members of officially sanctioned associations are compromised, complicit in the regime as recipients of its largess.

Very few professional associations, labor unions, or student syndicates took up the opportunity presented by political liberalization actually to challenge government policy. Indeed, when given the opportunity to contest elections, from Morocco to Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan, the secular liberal opposition has been notable for the frequency with which it chooses highminded election boycotts over the rough and tumble of campaign politics.

It was, of course, the Islamists who took up the government challenge to participate in politics. They appear to have found support in those social groups that benefited least from government largess, usually the poor and the young. There is a class or quasi-class connection if not exactly a class "base" for many of these new movements. Because they are not defined by the state in terms of their position in a productive process, however, they eschew what Jean Cohen calls the "productivist" cultural model and, like the new social movements of Europe, cast their claims against

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the government in terms of personal (religious) identity and moral outrage.

To some extent, the Islamists' reliance on a moral critique of their governments mirrors the rhetoric of those governments themselves. Because only self-defined moral responsibility or ideological commitment, not any fiscal incentives or obligations, required the governments to rule responsibly, the idiom of politics was not the prosaic language of budgets but, far more often, the righteous rhetoric of war, family honor, ethnic purity, religious virtue. In his candid style, the King of Morocco has reminded the members of the Moroccan Parliament of their responsibilities:

> The Holy Book indicates that all whom God has charged with a legislative or executive responsibility have to obey his control; a control from God first of all, a control from the one that God has charged with the responsibility of the Muslim community [that is, the King himself], and last of all a control by the voters.[7]

Like most governments, the regimes failed to meet the standards they set for themselves, losing at wars and succumbing to the temptations of flesh and spirit. Unlike those of their counterparts who are accountable to voters (and therefore know quite promptly when their "controllers" are unhappy), the absolutist rulers of the Arab world live with ambiguity. One might say that only periodic elections provide "hard political constraints." In their absence, incumbency is a matter of repeated but irregular bargaining between the office-holders and their patrons and clients. The divorce between the rulers and the ruled—or, perhaps better, their financial separation—makes for reliance on the rhetoric of welfare, on moral suasions and religious exhortation. Economic corruption becomes a mere symptom of moral corruption.

The class- and interest-based organizations—chambers of commerce, industrial and professional syndicates, labor unions—represent constituencies whose contribution to the government coffers is minimal, and they play a relatively small role in the domestic conflicts over government policy. The critical resources are ideological or symbolic, and only secondarily economic. The Islamists thus challenge the regimes where they need and want support—the realm of symbolic production—and the regimes respond in ways that reflect the extent to which issues of identity are central to their legitimation. Just as Arab nationalism itself was not an expression of specifically *economic* grievances against European imperialism but an assertion of identity and a demand for dignity, so too the role of religion in the Moroccan king's self-portrayal as the "Commander of the Faithful" and in Qaddafi's claim to legitimacy as a righteous ruler are appropriations of religious formulas for political uses. Even the secular Arab nationalists in Syria acknowledged the importance of Islam in the genius of Arab civilization; and in Algeria, Islam provided the sole marker that distinguished "Algerians" from their colonial rulers during the war of independence.

Unconstrained by periodic elections, the rulers let their welfare systems grow ramshackle and lined their pockets instead, all the while continuing the sing-song demands of sacrifice for the good of the nation. The ruled, schooled in the politics of identity and morality, began to reexamine the obligations of righteous rulers in Islam. Although they are quick to take advantage of expanded rights, such as greater press freedoms and opportunities to contest elections, the Islamists are not well disposed to liberal democracy, either by ideological inclination or social base.

Indeed, many of these movements look very much like the governments they oppose. They obtain significant resources from patrons abroad with which they construct and sustain their domestic clienteles. In rejecting the prevailing system, they aspire to an alternative no more "liberal" or "democratic" than the regimes that spawned them.

In their debates about political and moral authority, neither the existing regimes nor their opponents speak of establishing institutions by which government might be held accountable. The terrain of symbols of reciprocal moral obligations may be a passionate, complex, and potentially dangerous one, but it has the

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singular advantage of being cheap to government and opposition alike. Far more taxing, literally and figuratively, is the construction of the material means of guaranteeing popular representation and government accountability.

Small wonder, then, that the regimes of the region seem to have gotten cold feet about liberalization. What was supposed to be little more than a sop to a timid, largely dependent bourgeoisie, a device to broaden and solidify the regimes' support, now threatens those very regimes—but not with liberalism or democracy. □

Notes

[1] Elie Kedourie, *Democracy and Arab Political Culture* (Washington: Institute for Near East Policy, 1992), p. 1.

[2] Quoted in Tim Niblock, "International and Domestic Factors in the Economic Liberalization Process in the Arab World," in Tim Niblock and Emma Murphy, eds., *Economic and Political Liberalization in the Middle East* (New York: British Academic Press, 1993), p. 63.

[3] Amani Kandil, "Some Features of Egypt's Civil Society," *Civil Society: Democratic Transformation in the Arab World*. No. 1 (January 1992), p. 3.

[4] Paul Starr, "Social Categories and Claims in the Liberal State," *Social Research*, 59:2 (Summer 1992), p. 273.

[5] Jean Cohen, "Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements," *Social Research*, 52:4 (Winter 1985), p. 667.

[6] Robert Bianchi, "Democratization in the Middle East: Four Reasons for Optimism," *Arab-American Affairs*, 36 (Spring 1991), p. 6.

[7] Reported in *Le Matin du Sahara*, October 16, 1978, and cited by Mohammed Tozy, "Islam and the State," in I. William Zartman and William Mark Habeeb, eds., *Polity and Society in Contemporary North Africa*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), p. 108.

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Daniel Bell

THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Beyond the Year 2000

For five hundred years, Europe has been the center of world civilization. In that time, it initiated—one can even say invented—the idea and the fact of sustained economic growth. Since Galileo, it has been the cradle of modern technology, particularly with navigation and scientific instruments. In philosophy, music, painting, and literature, it transformed our conceptions of perspective and perception, of tonality and the diatonic scale, and of the relation of fiction to reality. All this, in a sense, was the application of an idea of rationality unknown to the non-Western world.

And yet, in that same period of time, the plains of Europe saw some of the most devastating wars in the history of human civilization: from Napoleon's revolutionary army crossing to and retreating from Russia to the two world wars, involving all the major and minor powers, in which more than fifty million people were killed. The latter part of the nineteenth century saw the rapid spread of imperialism to almost all of Africa and Asia (with the exception of Japan), so that before World War II, 80 percent of the land mass of the world, and 80 percent of the world's peoples, were under Western domination. And the twentieth century saw the rise of the two most deadly ideologies in history, communism and fascism, which ended in the Gulag and the Holocausts of Stalin and Hitler.

Since the end of World War II, Western imperialism has almost completely disappeared, with a rapidity that future historians will find astonishing (though the legacies of tribalism, colonialism, and ill-fitting national boundaries remain, especially in Africa). Both communism and fascism have collapsed, their ideologies transformed into new nationalisms, especially in the old Soviet-dominated areas. War between the Great Powers—Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy—is entirely unlikely.

In the last decade and a half, Europe—and here I concentrate specifically on Western Europe—has begun an experiment that, from a historical perspective, is unparalleled—at least on such a scale. This is the effort of the twelve countries, now all democratic, to create a single harmonious community that would coordinate their economic and political institutions and by the year 2000—at least according to the original plan—create a unified currency and an integral political federation. The only parallel is Switzerland, which, after the Congress of Vienna in 1815, became a Federal Republic, half Catholic, half Protestant, with three different languages (German, French, and Italian), and twenty-six cantons, or local districts, with their own system of courts.

But beyond all this is the larger, more fateful, historical question—the role of Europe in a new and enlarged world society, with a global economy, and a great shift of power to the Pacific-rim nations in the twenty-first century. Even if there were a unified Europe, could it still play a major role in the economics, politics, and culture of world society in the next century?

The effort to create a "new Europe" can be identified in four steps, as follows.

This article is part of a larger study of the future of Europe, dealing with political, monetary, and cultural issues, and concentrates here largely on Europe's economy and welfare systems.

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1. **The Common Market**, which is basically a customs union among the members, an area of free trade, and an external common tariff. This is now legally in effect.

2. **The Single Market** (a situation similar to that in the United States except for the currency), in which there would be complete free movement of capital and labor, the harmonization of welfare and labor policies, and the free establishment of services (financial, insurance, and legal) throughout the community. Here, in principle, the new freedoms are established, though there are many practical barriers.

3. **An Economic and Monetary Union**. This would mean a harmonization of economic policies, ceilings for public deficits, and, eventually, a single currency used by all members. But the first-step agreement to keep exchange-rate parities among members has broken down, because of actions last year by the German Bundesbank. (See my "Behind the European Currency Crisis," *Dissent*, Winter 1993.)

4. **A Political Federation**. A European Parliament now exists, with members elected from all nations. And there is a large administrative bureaucracy in Brussels. But the key to political federation was the Maastricht Treaty signed in December 1991, which adopted "convergence criteria" that would give the European Parliament veto power in several areas. Consumer protection, health, and education would come under community scrutiny, and steps would be taken to encourage a common foreign and defense policy. But Maastricht, and the fear of a central bureaucracy, has proven to be a stumbling block toward a united Europe.

The European Economic Arena, consisting of the twelve European Community countries (plus Scandinavia, Switzerland, and Austria, if they join), is now the largest trading bloc on earth, with more than 40 percent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) within its fold. Germany was considered to be the major powerhouse. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany were going to create a two trillion dollar dream economy whose skilled workers and world-class manufacturers would make it the envy of the world.

Yet little has turned out that way. For the past three years, Europe has been in the midst of an agonizing economic recession. In 1992, real GDP growth in Europe was 0.5 percent. And in 1993, *every* country in Europe experienced *negative* growth. The German economy was hit the worst, experiencing a 2 percent drop in GDP, and industrial production in 1993 was 7 percent below that of 1992, reflecting the worst postwar recession. No one expects more than 1 percent growth in 1994.

Some of this is cyclical, reflecting the usual ups and downs of the business cycle, and the effects of the worldwide recession. But the more important question is how much is structural, likely to persist even in a recovery. One way to answer this question is to measure the budget deficits in each country as they widen or narrow. An OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) study last year showed that in Europe the causes of the recession were largely structural. In Germany, the budget deficit as a percentage of GDP was 4.1 percent, of which 3 percent was structural. In Italy it was 9.5 percent, of which 7.4 was structural. And in France it was 5.7 percent, of which 3.1 was structural. The economies will probably turn up for cyclical reasons, but the deeper problems remain.

The structural question is central for understanding the long-term prospects of the economy. In Europe, the major structural problems are social welfare costs and aging, inefficient industries propped up by subsidies. These eat away at government revenues and reduce productive investment. A corollary factor is rigid labor markets (the costs of reducing a work force by benefit payments, and the unwillingness or inability of workers to move, for family reasons or because of cultural differences).

The most surprising issue is social welfare. Forty or so years ago, Marxist theory said that the capitalist state would spend for warfare, but not for welfare. But it is welfare that now may be strangling the capitalist state.

The modern welfare state was proposed fifty years ago in Great Britain by the famous "Beveridge Report" (though Germany had

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initiated some social insurance fifty years before, to "buy off" the growing socialist movement). Written during the war, the report proposed the end of hunger and poverty, and the use of the resources of the state to provide not only a "safety net" against the hazards of unemployment, but a framework of benefits that would guarantee an individual and a family the basis of self-respect. Beveridge proposed a comprehensive system of national insurance, financed by employer contributions, that would provide unemployment benefits, health services, and old-age pensions. In addition, there were family allowances for children, services for the disabled, and social-service counseling for family and mental health problems. The plan vastly increased the power of the state, which for the first time assumed responsibility for the relief of poverty and the welfare of the society. The Attlee Labour government in Great Britain initiated the program. And every country in Europe followed suit.

In Europe, public spending as a whole (government administrative expenses, subsidies to industry and farmers, and social welfare) amounts to about 49 percent of Gross Domestic Product (as against 37 percent twenty years ago). That compares with 37 percent in the United States and 32 percent in Japan. But social-security expenditures accounted for 25 percent of the total GDP in Europe, compared to 15 percent in the United States and 10 percent in Japan.

The welfare state has been most costly in Germany, with Italy second. One-third of German GDP goes for social spending, and social-insurance contributions (split 50-50 between employers and workers) amount to about 40 percent of gross pay. The average German manufacturing worker, the highest-paid in Europe, receives about $27 an hour in wages and benefits, of which $12.50 comes in the form of social benefits. Italian workers receive more in benefits than wages in their $21-an-hour compensation. (In contrast, in the U.S. a worker's $16 an hour has only $4.50 in benefits.) Hourly manufacturing labor costs in Germany are about 35 percent higher than in the United States, Japan, or even Great Britain.

Looking ahead, there are the rising costs of pensions. By the year 2015, the number of Germans over age sixty-five will rise by 50 percent, from twelve million to nearly eighteen million. By the year 2030, the number of Germans over age sixty will be double that under age twenty. According to the OECD, the present value of future pensions in Germany is 1.6 times current GDP.* In Italy, deficits in social programs accounted for half of the 1992 budget deficit, or a huge 10 percent of GDP. Italian old-age pensions are the most generous in Europe (and a person can retire, in many instances, at age 55, then seek another job) and about 40 percent of the members of the CGIL, the largest trade-union movement in Italy, are today on retirement pensions. According to Luigi Spaventa, one of the most talented economists in Europe, and the minister of the budget in the caretaker "technocratic" government, pensions are the largest "fiscal drag" in the Italian budget.

Social spending has reached a limit in Europe for political, economic, and even moral reasons. Under the Maastricht agreement, setting up convergence criteria on public-sector debt and deficits, only Luxembourg, of the twelve European Community members, is in compliance. Economic costs have reduced industrial competitiveness, while the large social-insurance benefits reduce labor mobility, since workers often prefer to draw on unemployment compensation rather than move elsewhere. Assar Lindbeck, the Swedish economist, has argued that incentives to work and to produce are destroyed when the state takes away too much from those who are working and gives too much to those who are idle.

The other major structural problem is industrial. Europe led the way in the first two industrial revolutions. The first one was in England, where the invention of steam power by James Watt, and the application of energy to machines, began the transformation of the

* Both Germany and Italy are increasing the retirement age to restrain expenditures. Germany's pension-law reform, which went into effect last January, provides that by 2001, the normal retirement age for men and women would be raised to 65.

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world. Steam power gave us locomotives and steamships. By applying steam power to machines, we began factory production. But there were other ways, equally important, unremarked in the textbooks. The most crucial was the creation of steam pumps, so that one could pump the water out of coal mines and dig deep down. England is an island that was bedded on coal, especially in the Midlands. By digging up the coal, one could create a steel industry. And with steel, the associated products in metals engineering, shipyards, and automobiles. Textiles and steel were the foundations of England's early wealth.

The second industrial revolution began in Germany around the 1880s. This was the creation of the large chemical and electrical industries. With chemicals, for the first time, humans could make things that were not found in nature, such as plastics, and with oil, the petrochemicals. With electricity we had both the new sources of amplified power and the transformation of night and day by light, as well as the ability to send coded messages and then voice on electrical lines, creating the telegraph and the telephone.

All this is why Europe was able to lead the world in its industrial transformations. England and Germany were the sources of these transformations. One forgets that before World War II, France and Italy were not industrial societies. Theirs were small workshop industries run by family firms. After World War II, both were transformed. France opened a large new steel industry in Alsace-Lorraine and began the development of chemicals and electricity. Italy expanded its textile and chemical industries, as well as rubber. And all the major countries of Europe went in heavily for the manufacture of automobiles.

The major problem is that Europe has not made the transition, as have the United States and Japan, largely to the postindustrial sectors of information and knowledge (computers and telecommunications). There are some large individual firms in these sectors, such as NV Philips in the Netherlands, Erickson in Sweden, Siemens in Germany, Cable and Wireless in the United Kingdom, and Nokia in Finland. Yet in the crucial areas of microchip technology and software, there are no major players in Europe.

Europe is still struggling with the industrial society, particularly steel and automobiles. (The shipyard industry is gone almost completely.) The European Coal and Steel Commission (the forerunner of the European Community itself) was formed in 1951 to "rationalize" the industry. In the past twenty years it helped close down many mills and eliminate 500,000 jobs. But gluts and surplus capacity remain. The industry last year lost $4.5 billion, and it has sought to "dump" steel abroad to cover costs, prompting retaliation by the United States (which itself had lost 500,000 jobs). The European Commission wants to reduce capacity to about 80 percent of the current 190 million tons and cut 50,000 more jobs. But state-owned and subsidized steelmakers in Italy, Spain, and Germany have resisted. The European Commission, for example, wanted to reduce the tonnage of Ilva, a government-owned steel plant in Taranto, in southern Italy. But the government, which wanted to privatize part of the company, refused. And in Germany and other regions, local communities have bought the steel mills and continue to subsidize them to save jobs.

The same problem, only writ larger, exists in automobiles. There are now six major automobile companies in Europe—Fiat, Renault, Peugeot, Volkswagen, and the subsidiaries of Ford and General Motors. But the markets are now "mature," with little growth, and the intra-European competition will pit the major producers against each other. Fiat, which has been the major (if not the only) Italian firm, has concentrated its hopes on a new small car, the Punto. But European demand is estimated to grow by less than 400,000 cars a year, which is about half the decline in Fiat sales last year alone. BMW, the large luxury-car maker in Germany, has just taken over the English Rover (leaving England with no British-owned car manufacturer) and thus will increase the competition for mass sales. And Japanese factories in England are moving toward the production of a million cars a year by the year 2000, when all limits on Japanese imports into Europe are due to end.

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Germany finds itself in increasing difficulty. Four big industries—autos, machinery and machine tools, electrical engineering, and chemicals—account for about 60 percent of Germany's $425 billion export trade. But increased competition has hurt Germany badly, especially in autos, which account for nearly 20 percent of German exports. Volkswagen, the highest-cost big-volume car producer in Europe, which last year made 3.5 million cars, did not earn a pfennig. The result is that it cut its work force by 15 percent. And all over Europe, manufacturing jobs are shrinking rapidly.

Europe can succeed only if it can make the transition to postindustrial sectors. Just as "motors" were the engines of industrial production, "microprocessors" are the engines of the postindustrial, information-based economies. Yet in the area of microchips, the United States produces 47 percent and Japan 41 percent of all micro-electronic units. Germany spends more on subsidies for its older "smokestack" industries, such as coalmining and shipbuilding ($6.4 billion), than for basic research ($5.6 billion).

Germany is today in the midst of a *techno-Angst*, and for good reason. It is losing out in computers, communication electronics, office technology, lasers, and energy technology. In the field of biotechnology and genetic engineering, which is predicted to be a $100 billion industry by the year 2000, German companies now spend an estimated 75 percent of their research-and-development budgets abroad, principally in the United States. Even more important, the revolution in materials technology, which is only now getting seriously under way, means that the older resource-based production becomes less important than technological substitutions (for example, fiber optics for copper). And it is the growth of "technology complexes" and "networking" that cross borders and favor regional developments that is now the source of economic growth. And that poses a challenge to the national state.

Can the transitions be made? All this, theoretically, is manageable in the cycle of industrial restructuring. Japan, from 1960 to 1990, was the world's shining example. It began with textiles and light industry, but when these were taken over by Hong Kong and cheaper producers, Japan moved into optics and instruments, and then to steel, shipbuilding, and automobiles. But after the oil shock of the 1970s, and the increasing costs of energy, it moved quickly into knowledge-based, and electronic and computer-based, industries. But where is Europe to go? The strong rigidities in the major industrial sectors have inhibited structural changes.

There are "rays of hope"—the growth of small-scale, cottage-type manufacturing areas, based on network-linked companies that share market information and allow workers to move about—as in the Prato and Veneto in northern Italy (making textiles and furniture, for example), or in southern Germany, with small machine-tools and parts, or in the Jutland area of Denmark. But these are not sizable enough to affect the major problems.

The single largest economic and social problem in Europe today is unemployment: about thirty-five million persons are without work. In France, Italy, Germany, Denmark, and Great Britain, more than 10 percent of the labor force is unemployed, and this figure may rise to 12 percent, as an average, by the end of 1994. (Spain is a special case, where 23 percent of the population is listed as unemployed, due largely to the delayed transition out of agriculture and the failure of industry to take up the slack.) All of this is politically explosive, especially since few political parties or the trade unions want to take the strong medicine necessary to reduce wage costs, increase labor mobility, or limit pensions and social spending.

In a remarkable report issued in December 1993, the European Commission proposed lowering the minimum wage and cutting social security payments in the hope of creating fifteen million jobs by the year 2000. In a statement presenting the report, Jacques Delors, the president of the commission and a French socialist, declared: "If we want to safeguard the current model of European

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society and its welfare state, we must adopt this program. *We are no longer in a world where everything is guaranteed.*" (Emphasis added.)

Western Europe, in the fifty years after World War II, was re-created on the model of social democracy. Eastern Europe was shaped on the model of communism or state socialism. The Eastern European model has collapsed. And now the model of social democracy faces an impasse. This is the basis for the coming political crisis of the left in Europe.

Peter Glotz

EUROPE IS NOT LOST YET

A Comment on Daniel Bell

Europe is not lost yet. Daniel Bell's arguments are good, but not convincing. Bell's basic error lies in his hidden suspicion of the shape of the European welfare state. Without a doubt, in the next ten years the social welfare systems of the European heartlands will have to be intelligently restructured. The claim that this will be impossible after the first ill-boding catastrophes and under pressure caused by suffering is entirely unprovable. Bell's reference to the fact that the United States spends 15 percent, Japan 10 percent, and Europe 25 percent of its gross national product for social welfare says nothing about the long-term competitiveness of these countries or blocs. One might ask how long the United States will be able to live with a capitalist system that in the bottom third of society leads to brutal poverty, vicious aggressiveness, and rampant criminality. One is more sure of one's life in Sindelfingen, Arezzo, or Lyons than in Miami or Detroit. It is reckless when comparing differing cultures to consider only economic costs and to ignore the fact that economic success also requires a minimum of social cohesion.

To be sure, the "invention" of the European social state was an accomplishment of social democracy and the workers' movement. Nonetheless, Ralf Dahrendorf's thesis of the "social-democratic century" (or half-century), which Bell has tacitly adopted, is false. Since 1945, conservatives and liberals have governed in Europe far longer than social democrats. With the exception of Margaret Thatcher, they have supported the social welfare systems (the first of which was created by Bismarck). Were it valid to speak of a "bankruptcy" of the West European social model, the bankruptcy would not be solely one of social democracy; Catholic social theory, social Protestantism, and the social-republican tradition of conservatism would likewise have failed. However, it is still very much a question whether market radicalism, as Hayek conceived it, will really win out against European corporatism. The successes of the postcommunist parties in Central and East Europe (for example, in Poland and Hungary, but also in Slovenia) show that the peak of Thatcherism was only an episode, even in societies terrorized by communism for decades. The Latin-Americanization of Europe does not appear likely.

Also, Europe has many strengths that Bell ignores. The German system of pure research constantly gives its society the chance to begin anew; "dual" occupational training, carried out jointly by businesses and schools, produces a first-rate corps of skilled workers. John Kenneth Galbraith has sufficiently praised Italian genius in "design," and the French bureau-

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cracy has imbued the European Commission with its distinct flavor. A Europe that places its bet on cooperation has a chance.

In my view, the old continent must accomplish three things above all if it intends to play a decisive role in the twenty-first century:

- *Europe must complete the process of unification.* At the moment, success is doubtful. After 1989, untenable promises were made to the East Europeans. The Treaty of Maastricht was poorly negotiated and could remain mere words. If Europe continues to bungle in its industrial policies as it has in microelectronics or in high-definition television, Bell's pessimistic forecasts could become reality.
- *Europe needs wisely conceived immigration laws.* Anyone who visits the departments of computer science and engineering in California universities will see the enrichment brought to the United States by the immigration from Asian countries, for example. Against the background of European history, a population policy that follows the Hitler model, that is, one that aims at raising the birthrate of the Germans, French, Italians, or Dutch, will stand no chance. On the other hand, a well-considered, properly organized immigration policy, coordinated on a European basis, could solve the problems that will arise around the year 2000 for the job market, the retirement system, and the infrastructure.
- *Europe needs a new wave of industrial and economic expansion.* Our large enterprises all came into being at the end of the nineteenth century. The new enterprises that were founded after 1945 were swallowed up by the old dinosaurs. While businesses with worldwide operations are constantly developing in the United States, the European industrial structure is petrifying. A cultural revolution is necessary: a new stock market system, a revised insolvency law, venture capitalism, assistance through well-guided tax policies, and so on.

Without a doubt, such reforms are hard to achieve. Since 1989, a revitalized European nationalism has been working against Europeanization; large portions of a citizenry that still thinks in ethnic terms oppose a purposeful policy of immigration; the traditionalist sector of the union movement will be up in arms against modern industrial policies (and the reforming of the welfare state). In the second half of the 1990s, the classical European political party system will have to be restructured; in their traditional mold, neither Social Democratic nor Christian Democratic parties are sufficiently capable of reform. But one should not underestimate the elite institutions that underlie European growth. The European economy is already implementing a significant adaptation of its cost structures. A modernization of the industrial structure is beginning. The integration of Europe through computer technology is progressing. The romantic fear of technology of the early 1980s is transforming itself into a strategy of ecological modernization. It is by no means certain that good old Europe is deteriorating into a museum of cultural history.

Translated from the German by SIDNEY ROSENFELD and STELLA P. ROSENFELD

Dissent's New Price

Pressed by the exigencies of the market, we have had to raise the price of a single issue of *Dissent* to $7.50. But we have decided to hold the subscription price for individuals at its current level. We lose money on single issues (which doesn't make us any less eager to sell them), but we still earn a margin on subs. So the new price structure is designed to make subscribing more attractive—the economically rational choice! You can now get four issues of *Dissent* in the mail for a little less than the price of three issues at the newsstand or bookstore. A two-year sub saves you $16.00. Savings for students are much greater. Please help *Dissent* by subscribing now, for two years if you can. The more subs we sell, the more likely it is that we will be able to keep the subscription price at $22.00 a year.

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Daniel Bell Responds

Peter Glotz's reply reminds me of the old *witz*: the young boy is asked, "Hans, where is your right ear?" "Right ear?" He raises his left hand, reaches over his head, and touches his right ear. So, with the reply.

The first part is an unworthy *tu quoque*. I am not defending a brutal capitalist system, and we are both appearing in *Dissent*, a socialist magazine that is now willing to confront questions that socialists tended to ignore in the past. So, too, with my essay.

I made two points: (1) that the welfare state is becoming a difficult burden for most European economies to bear, largely because of the pressure of the trade unions; and (2) more important, that Europe (especially Germany, as the economic leader) is failing to make the necessary transitions to postindustrial sectors and is still concentrated (especially in its export industries) in the older industrial sectors.

As to the first, I cited the observation of the Italian left-wing economist Luigi Spaventa, then minister of the budget in the caretaker government, that Italy can no longer afford the welfare benefits being paid out, and that Germany is now lengthening the retirement age, to come into effect years from now. Peter Glotz responds that "in the next ten years the social welfare systems . . . have to be intelligently restructured." But how, given the heavy demographic weights that Europe, especially Germany, faces with rising aged populations?

One can afford "restructuring" with economic growth. But how? Peter Glotz gives the answers, and I quote each successive topic sentence:

> Europe must complete the process of unification.
> Europe needs wisely conceived immigration laws.
> Europe needs a new wave of industrial and economic expansion.

But I am afraid that Dr. Pangloss, and his old associate, Professor John Kenneth Galbraith, have not yet raised their hands—either right or left.

POSTSCRIPT:

Since writing my reply, I have read the somewhat frightening report "Europe and the Underclass" in the *Economist* of July 30, 1994. I quote it to document some of the issues raised in my original article:

> When America was discerning the early outlines of its underclass in the 1970s, Europe had no poverty debate to speak of. There were some poor people in Europe's cities, certainly, but it was assumed they would not stay that way for very long; the welfare state, that most generous of European inventions, would help them to help themselves. Two decades on, that confidence seems tragically misplaced. Hamburg, Europe's richest city measured by income per head, had by 1990 Germany's highest proportion of millionaires—and its highest proportion of people on social welfare. Unemployment was 40% higher than the national average. A third of the industrial jobs had disappeared in the past 15 years. . . .
>
> The disappearance of some kinds of jobs would not be an issue if new jobs were springing up to absorb those affected. The problem is they are not. More than 40% of the 17 million unemployed in the European Union have been out of work at least a year; a third have never worked at all. . . .
>
> Public order can easily become fragile. Examples of such places can be found across Europe. Many Frankfurters will name Gallusviertel and Gutlwuviertel as areas to avoid; residents of Griesheim . . . view their neighborhood as a ghetto—the Bronx in Frankfurt.

The debate on poverty in Europe today revolves around solutions such as work-sharing, enhanced social benefits, and the like. But these are illusory. The "solution" is to create more jobs, rather than helping people get by without them or in sharing the "misery." Yet as the *Economist* comments: "Unfortunately, job-creation is something for which Europe seems to have lost the knack."

The premise of the welfare state was that the losers would be looked after. And this was the humane response. But as the *Economist* concludes: "As even prosperous cities like Hamburg, Rotterdam and Paris can testify, the European model has proved insecure and unsustainable. In Europe . . . there are millions in danger of slipping beyond the point of no return." □

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Harold Meyerson

CLINTON AT AN IMPASSE

Midway through Year Two of Bill Clinton's presidency, the most striking aspect of his tenure in office is the demobilization, the silence, of the coalition that brought him to power. As far as the nineties are concerned, the Schlesinger thirty-year cyclical theory of American politics is turning out to be about half right. As in the thirties and the sixties, a mildly progressive Democrat occupies the White House. Unlike the thirties and the sixties, there is no mass progressive movement anywhere in sight to push the Congress and the president to the left.

It's not as if the supporters of the progressive side of Clinton's agenda aren't out there, though. Mid-summer polling showed that between 75 percent and 80 percent of Americans favored government-guaranteed universal health coverage, and that, depending on how the question is phrased, support for making employers pick up the tab ranged from 50 percent (when small business was specifically mentioned) to the low seventies (when it wasn't).

And yet, as I write in mid-July, universal coverage and employer mandates are both viewed by the political-media establishment as marginal, almost quaint, policy options, about as likely to emerge from the legislative process as, say, collective farms. As I write, the Democratic leadership in Congress is endeavoring to enhance the prospects for health care's passage by lowering the amounts employers will be made to pay and raising the share required of individuals. There's something breathtakingly counterintuitive about all this—except that, on economic questions that pit the broad public interest against an array of business lobbies, we have reached the point where mass sentiment is too demobilized to merit serious consideration.

It may be, of course, that by the time you read this, the administration will have figured out how to stir up enough support for health care to have squeezed a serious bill through Congress. Even if it does, the gulf between the zeitgeist and the polling suggests a virtual collapse of institutions crucial to a functioning democracy. In the single most important public policy debate in a generation, every institution required to translate public opinion into public policy has proved wanting. Their shortcomings are mutually reinforcing, but taking these entities one-by-one we find:

- **Unions:** The weakening of the labor movement is the single greatest factor in the administration's inability to move its core economic agenda. Labor was key to the progressive reforms of the thirties and sixties: in Roosevelt's time, the ascendant and militant force behind (and ahead of) much of the New Deal; in Kennedy's and Johnson's, the linchpin of the Great Society coalition, particularly in matters of congressional lobbying. By the time Clinton came to power, though, the rate of private-sector unionization had declined to roughly 11 percent—too low for labor to play a decisive role in defining the debate or lobbying the Hill. The many Democratic members of Congress from substantially deunionized districts and states are increasingly more attentive to the arguments and the clout of small business and insurance associations than they are to those of labor.

- **The Democratic Party:** Unlike his Democratic predecessors from Roosevelt through Johnson, Clinton has come to power at a time when party discipline has become a virtual oxymoron. The district organizations, both

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patronage-based and amateur, that could pressure a wayward congressperson are long gone. The national Democratic leaders like Johnson, who could sway the votes of his fellow members through his ability to funnel funds into their campaigns, have been washed away by the flood of political money available to incumbents. Johnson, the preeminent legislative leader of the fifties, was famed for his ability to intimidate his colleagues; Dick Gephardt, the model legislative leader of the nineties, is famed for his ability to listen to his colleagues. The point's not that the leadership is getting nicer; it's that power—absent parties and unions—is more diffused.

- **The Media:** Through a combination of tabloidization, radical cynicism, and a pack mentality, the media have managed to disseminate astonishingly little information about the basic policy options confronting the government. During the first three months of this year, according to the Tyndall Report on network news, the nightly newscasts of ABC, CBS, and NBC devoted three times the coverage to Whitewater that they accorded health care. Small wonder that one poll showed that fewer Americans understood the contents of the Clinton plan in March 1994 than in September 1993, when he unveiled it. (And that was before O.J. Simpson.) Throughout much of what passes for American news coverage, the personal has not just become the political; it has all but supplanted it.

- **Liberalism:** The decline of unions has had a particularly disastrous effect on the liberal movement. As the constituency that had anchored liberalism to a broad-based economic agenda grew steadily weaker, the movement fractured into a series of movements pressing the claims of particular groups. During the eighties, liberal activism came to mean activism on behalf of reproductive freedoms, Social Security and Medicare, gay rights, civil liberties, and a range of African-American and Latino concerns. Unarguable as many of these causes may have been in themselves, when taken together they formed a liberalism that was stunted in its appeal.

First, this was a liberalism that had remarkably little to say to straight white men—the sector, unless all the polls are wrong, that has bounded rightward over the past decade in its rage against the government and the political establishment. The polls also show this to be a constituency capable of raging against the corporate establishment (understandably, since it's borne much of the brunt of downsizing and deindustrialization). However, the purging of an anticorporate populism from mainstream liberalism has meant not only giving this constituency nothing to cling to in the liberal agenda, but ensuring that it views liberals simply as the enemy—as advocates for its competitors in a shrinking economy. Second, this was a liberalism that has been unable to wheel into formation in the cause of universally targeted progressive reforms. In the spring of 1993, the activists swarmed over Capitol Hill in defense of gays in the military and Lani Guinier—not on behalf of higher corporate tax rates or an effective stimulus program. After two decades in staunch defense of minority rights, the increasingly labor-less liberals have not yet devised a way to rally their troops behind a majoritarian program.

All of which leaves Clinton with little to fall back on other than the polls and whatever mandate he can claim from his 43-percent victory. But polls and mandates are likely not enough to push through universal health coverage in 1994—just as polls and mandates were not enough to push through Clinton's equally popular public investment program in 1993. The chief difference between the two battles is that health care emerged relatively intact from the White House to be savaged in Congress, while the investment program of 1993 succumbed to the elite consensus on reducing the deficit even before the administration sent it to the Hill.

The Agenda, Bob Woodward's account of the 1993 White House economic wars, tells a tale of infanticide: of how the most popular programs of Clinton's presidential campaign—universal college loans, national service, a national apprenticeship program, the postwar retooling of American industry and the rebuild-

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ing of the national infrastructure—were strangled in their cribs.

The White House that Woodward depicts is a house divided against itself. In one camp are the politicos and the liberals—consultants James Carville, Paul Begala, and Stan Greenberg, Labor Secretary Robert Reich, and *consigliere* George Stephanopoulos are the key players—who look to a series of universal programs and fairer taxes to unite the Democrats' base with swing voters in search of more economic security. In the other camp are the business-heads and deficit hawks—and the major players here are Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen, National Economic Council *capo* Robert Rubin, advisers David Gergen and Mack McLarty, and former Office of Management and Budget chief and new chief-of-staff Leon Panetta—who favor deficit reduction over any more Keynesian course. Some of them (Panetta in particular) seem to believe, against all historical evidence to the contrary, that reducing the deficit is so essential to prosperity that it will lock in both Democratic and swing support. Others (McLarty and Gergen) seem intent on forging a new governing coalition that runs from David Boren and the Democratic Leadership Council on the left to Bob Dole and occasionally even Newt Gingrich (who, after all, teamed up with the White House on the NAFTA fight) on the right.

Presiding over both these strategies is Clinton himself, who doesn't so much synthesize them as pursue them to cross-purposes. "One moment he wanted more costly investments," Woodward quotes Stephanopoulos as saying, "the next moment, more cuts." There was an "unbridgeable chasm," Woodward has Stephanopoulos continuing, between Clinton and Clinton.

Indeed, Clinton emerges from *The Agenda* as oddly dissociated from the consequences of his own choices. When the omission of his investment program from the budget is pointed out to him, he rages that the administration has become "a bunch of Eisenhower Republicans." But Leon Panetta *was* an Eisenhower Republican who joined the Democrats when the Goldwaterization of the GOP grew too much for him. Lloyd Bentsen was one of the last purebred Bourbon Democrats. What policies did Clinton expect them to formulate when he appointed them? Does he really believe he can mobilize the McLarty coalition (on NAFTA) and the Stephanopoulos coalition (on health care) sequentially, or even simultaneously? This goes way beyond a normal case of political balancing; it's more like assuming that the normal laws of thermodynamics—that actions engender reactions—have been suspended.

Still, the rage that Woodward recounts is altogether credible. Clinton surely felt that the relegitimation of public investment was one of the signal achievements of his campaign. He believed that investment would be a good part of his legacy—and, with his political consultants, he also believed it would broaden his base. On this last particular, he was probably right: one of the few states where Clinton's popularity held up the longest is California, where the earthquake permitted him to unleash his one big-ticket stimulus program. Conversely, his failure to generate any significant public investment to retool defense or aid high tech has cost him support from the one segment of capital he seemed poised in 1992 to claim as his own.

It's hard to say how much more successful Clinton would be if Clintonism were a less self-subverting set of doctrines and strategies. It's something of a chicken-and-egg conundrum: if labor were stronger, Clinton wouldn't need to flit around trying to assemble disparate coalitions on different issues. But bashing labor on NAFTA hardly enhances its clout when he calls for its help on health care.

Indeed, the organized labor movement appears nowhere in *The Agenda*, an omission that cannot be totally written off to Woodward's own blind spots. In its stead—serving as the administration's usually populist and sometimes progressive consciousness—are Clinton's consultants. As Woodward recounts it, they were frozen out of the 1993 budget deliberations, leading to what he terms "a near fatal disconnection. . . . [T]he vital link between Bill Clinton and voters was being severed."

What does it mean that the champions of economic populism within a Democratic ad-

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ministration are its political consultants and pollster? On one level, it means that the administration hasn't made many high-level progressive hires; and on a deeper level that we are in an era where the populist and progressive impulses are no longer effectively expressed by social movements, but have become the stuff of pollsters, disaggregated opinions to be tallied and divined.

Up until the time that Clinton took office, one could speak of an overarching Clinton strategy, and it still peeks out now and then from behind the achievements and the debris of his first two years. As articulated by Clinton and Begala and most fully and cogently by columnist E.J. Dionne, Jr., it goes something like this: the Democrats have forfeited the trust of the public by flouting its values while neglecting to advance its basic interests. The party can reclaim the vital center in American politics by subordinating its cultural liberalism and promoting such populist and universal programs as health care and college loans.

It's still a strategy that Clinton has pursued more than is commonly realized. Gays-in-the-military may have been big-time cultural liberalism, but he's tried to balance it off with his rhetorical emphasis on moral regeneration. His most crucial appointments, Supreme Court justices in particular, have been dutifully centrist.

The strategy hasn't proved wrong, exactly: it was surely a prerequisite for winning the election. But it hasn't proved sufficient to rebuild support for a government that is not merely in the cultural mainstream but that pursues an economic activism to the benefit of the majority of Americans. The politics of cultural marginality, it turns out, wasn't all that stood between the Democrats and their enduring re-creation of a vibrant center. There was also the power of capital—key sectors of which are fiercely opposed to Clinton's agenda, and remarkably indifferent to his cultural mainstreaming. It was the bond market (or the mystique of the bond market, or both) that killed Clinton's investment agenda. It's the small business and insurance agent lobbies that are crippling health insurance.

Clinton's victory in 1992 was a signal achievement—reorienting Democratic doctrine to rehabilitate an activist state, actually creating the prospect of a popular, activist government. What wasn't immediately clear was that the election was the easy part of the battle. "If I do too little investment," Woodward quotes a frustrated Clinton, "then some other candidate won the election, not me." Precisely. Winning not only over George Bush but over the bond market and small business requires powerful institutions as committed to Clinton's investment and health care policies as the bond market and small business, respectively, are opposed. Such institutions do not currently exist, and in an era when the economy has gone global and politics remains ineffectually national, they are not easily summoned into existence. But without them, all the recentering in the world will not yield a Democratic realignment.

Clinton, after all, entered office with an agenda for progressive change at least as articulated as Roosevelt's and Kennedy's—in many ways, a good deal more so. His failures, finally, are less a function of his own inability to choose than of his countrymen's inability to organize. Without a John L. Lewis, he cannot become a Roosevelt; without a Martin Luther King, Jr., he cannot become a Kennedy or Johnson; without a left, the center remains maddeningly beyond his grasp. □

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Nicolaus Mills

MISSISSIPPI SUMMER—1994

In front of the Mississippi State Capitol, resting securely between the artillery that points toward Mississippi Street, is a statue dedicated "to the women of the Confederacy whose pious ministrations to our wounded soldiers soothed the last hours of those who died far from the objects of their tenderest love." There is no avoiding the statue. It sits in the middle of a walk. Your only choice is whether you pass it on the left or the right.

But the old Mississippi is also alive in other ways. The souvenir counter at the Jackson airport still carries picture postcards of the Confederate flag, and at the grave of James Chaney, one of three civil rights workers killed during the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964, the work of vandals who used high-powered rifles to deface his headstone is still visible.

The most telling sign of the old Mississippi is, however, to be found at the Governor's Mansion in Jackson, where Kirk Fordice, a Republican who came into office on a campaign based on opposing affirmative action and reducing welfare, has been deftly playing the race card since 1992. For Fordice, the key to holding on to his constituency is making sure that the old racial tensions remain. This summer, when the volunteers and organizers of the Mississippi Freedom Summer held their thirtieth reunion, Fordice went out of his way to make it clear that as far as he was concerned, little good could come from it. "These people feel that they want to relive what happened for their own reasons," he observed. "I think the sooner we put that behind us the better."

As visible as it is, the old Mississippi is not, however, dominant the way it once was. In the 1990s it is being challenged more intensely than at any time since the 1960s.

Jackson, the state's largest city, has emerged as a Southern arts center. This summer the city was host to the International Ballet Competition, and while the competition was playing to capacity audiences at Jackson's Municipal Auditorium, next door at the Mississippi Museum of Art, a Degas exhibit was going on. You couldn't go anywhere in downtown Jackson without seeing a pennant advertising the exhibit or running into clusters of ballerinas, rushing from their hotels to the competition.

Even more impressive are the political changes going on in Mississippi. The most publicized of these occurred last February 5 at the Hinds County Courthouse. There, thirty years after his first and second trials ended in hung juries, Byron De La Beckwith, the man accused of killing Medgar Evers in 1963 after his fingerprint was found on the fatal rifle, was found guilty by a Mississippi jury. The jury's decision says much about the new Mississippi. But equally revealing is the chain of circumstances that brought Beckwith to trial for the third time. It began with *Jackson Clarion-Ledger* investigative reporter Jerry Mitchell, who brought to light the role the state's once-powerful Sovereignty Commission played in screening jurors for the second trial. Then it involved the Mississippi Supreme Court, which said the Beckwith trial could go forward despite the passage of time, and finally it involved Hinds County Assistant District Attorney Bobby DeLaughter, who pursued the case despite enormous pressure to let it drop.

The De La Beckwith verdict was not an isolated event. Equally telling is the role now

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being played by Mississippi's African-American community in the education controversy known as the Ayers case. In 1975 Jake Ayers, the father of a Jackson State University student, sued the state of Mississippi for not providing equal education at historically black universities like Jackson State. Seventeen years later, on June 27, 1992, in the *United States v. Fordice*, the Supreme Court in an eight-to-one ruling upheld Ayers's complaint. The state of Mississippi, the Court said, must find more equitable ways to undo the vestiges of its old dual educational system—especially with regard to financing.

Under the supervision of U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers, Jr., of Oxford, hearings are now being held, and the black plaintiffs in the case are making a strong bid to guarantee that the state College Board does not carry out a plan that, under the guise of efficiency, would close one of Mississippi's three historically black universities and merge another with a historically white university. Any settlement of the Ayers case is a long way off, but the plaintiffs for the black universities have already won a significant victory. They have made it virtually impossible for Mississippi to reach a decision that fails to leave its historically black universities better off.

The brightest sign for Mississippi is, however, that in 1996 it may get the most progressive governor in its history: Dick Molpus, currently the secretary of state. Molpus has not formally announced his candidacy, but as he tours the state, raising money and meeting with supporters, it is clear that he has his eye on the 1995 governor's race.

His timing could not be better. When reform Democrat Ray Mabus won a stunning victory in the 1987 governor's race on a platform promising "basic, drastic change," it left Molpus, then entering his second term as secretary of state, nowhere to go. He couldn't run for governor without unleasing a bitter intraparty fight. But when Mabus lost to Fordice in 1991, everything changed. In Fordice, the owner of a Vicksburg construction company, Molpus has a formidable opponent who will have no trouble raising money for what may turn out to be the most expensive governor's campaign in Mississippi history. But he also has someone from whom he can distinguish himself on virtually every issue of consequence.

In winning the secretary of state job—first by a margin of 70 percent to 30 percent, then by 80 percent to 20 percent, and finally in an election in which he ran unopposed—Molpus has shown that he has enormous popular appeal. But he has also taken an office once thought of as largely ceremonial and made it a significant force in Mississippi politics.

When Molpus became secretary of state, lease rents from land, known as sixteenth sections, set aside under Mississippi law to benefit the state's public schools, were bringing in revenues far below market value. Molpus changed all that (he has renegotiated 4,600 leases since 1983) and also began an aggressive campaign with regard to timber sales from the sixteenth section lands. The result is that since 1983 Molpus's office has turned over $289 million to Mississippi's hard-pressed public schools.

At the same time he was making his office more efficient, Molpus was also making it more responsive to the state's changing politics. In 1991 he got the state legislature to agree to mail-in voter registration. In a state that has historically made registration difficult—especially for blacks—the mail-in ballot was an important departure from business as usual. There was no mistaking the fact that those it would most benefit were voters who were not part of the political establishment.

This year Molpus again challenged that establishment, helping lead the fight for lobby-law reform. The opposition was intense, especially from the influential Mississippi Power and Light Co., but lobby reform passed the House and was signed by the governor in early March. Mississippi's lobbyists, whose political spending has grown by a whopping 175 percent since 1990, will now have to make disclosures on virtually everything they spend.

Molpus, now forty-four, believes that Mississippi has a unique opportunity to institute lasting change. That opportunity comes from

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the state's financial situation. Mississippi is in the midst of an economic upturn. Its revenues from gambling (its first dockside casino opened in 1992), combined with a building boom, have brought the state a revenue windfall. Last year Mississippi received $65 million in gaming revenue, and the industry is expanding at a rate that in 1995 should generate at least $80 million. Throw in additional revenues from tourism and new construction, and it is easy to see why the state expects to balance its $2.5 billion 1995 budget and still spend $410 million more than it will in 1994.

As surrounding states begin to legalize gambling and the building boom in Mississippi slows, the state's surpluses, Molpus believes, will diminish. But if Mississippi takes advantage of its current situation, it can, he argues, assure itself long-term prosperity.

Molpus would have the state undertake two investment programs immediately. The first would involve upgrading Mississippi's infrastructure so that everything from roads to bridges to sewage systems was in good shape and paid for without the state's having to issue costly bonds. The second would involve the state's investing more in its public schools and attacking the problems that make much of its work force ill-suited to compete in the job market. (Currently, one out of four Mississippians over age twenty-five cannot read at an eighth-grade level.)

With this kind of internal investment, Mississippi would, Molpus believes, be in a position to attract the high-tech, high-skilled industry it needs. Such thinking is a dramatic departure from the past. Mississippi has traditionally advertised itself as a low-wage, low taxes state. Molpus believes that strategy is economically and politically discredited. "We have to decide who we compete with," he says. It ought not to be Mexico but Sunbelt states like North and South Carolina.

Faced with a sitting governor whose appeal to voters will be based on keeping welfare low, being tough on crime (Jackson had a record eighty-seven murders last year), and reducing the size of government, Molpus knows the risk he is taking in insisting that it is time for Mississippi to change direction. But he also believes that it is possible to go to voters and argue that Mississippi should stop being a state that because of its lack of growth makes its own college graduates one of its leading exports.

Molpus is banking on his record as secretary of state to give him credibility with voters. On the potential backlash issues that could harm him, he is not vulnerable the way a traditional liberal would be. He thinks Mississippi needs to build more prisons to house the career criminals who commit most of its crimes, and he is convinced that simply handing out condoms in the high schools won't do much to stop Mississippi's soaring teenage pregnancy rates. His point—one he makes over and over—is that without economic incentives fundamental change is impossible.

Can Molpus win on such a platform? Traveling with him as he tours the state makes one a believer. When he says that Mississippi is at a "defining moment"—that it has to choose between returning to its dark past or moving into a future that will be shared by all—his passion is unmistakable. Molpus's audiences at the fundraisers I attended were racially mixed, and his key financial support comes from a broad middle-class base rather than a few heavy contributors.

In 1987, when Ray Mabus scored his upset victory, he did it by winning the black vote by a nine-to-one margin and losing the white vote to Jack Reed, his Republican opponent, by roughly two to one. Four years later, in losing to Fordice by a narrow 51 percent to 47 percent margin, Mabus found that his support among black voters had slipped and that his reputation as an outsider—he is a Harvard Law School graduate who once worked for the prestigious Washington law firm of Sargent Shriver—hurt him in a race with a good old boy.

Molpus doesn't share these liabilities. He has spent his entire business and political life in Mississippi. At the same time his appeal to black voters, roughly 35 percent of the electorate, isn't simply that of a white Mississippian who knows the times have changed. The mail-in voter registration reform

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Molpus fought for as secretary of state made it clear where he stood politically, and in helping found Parents for Public Schools, a Jackson-based group committed to getting white students to return to the public schools (both of his children go to public school in Jackson), Molpus showed that he was willing to get personally involved in Mississippi's toughest racial fights.

"We've wasted too much time on intramural battles," Molpus tells his audiences. Coming from him, the words have credibility. In 1989, at ceremonies marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the murder of civil rights workers James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman, Molpus, who was born in the small Mississippi town where the three were murdered, used the occasion to deliver a speech many thought would end his political career. "Today we pay tribute to those who died. We acknowledge that dark corner of our past," Molpus declared. "We deeply regret what happened here twenty-five years ago. We wish we could undo it. Every decent person in Philadelphia and Neshoba County and Mississippi feels that way."

In a few short minutes, Molpus had done what everyone was sure no white elected official in Mississippi would ever do—publicly apologize for the racial violence his state once condoned. It was a defining moment for Molpus and Mississippi, and watching him campaign these days, what is striking is how natural it is for him to talk about moral and political issues when he meets with voters. One has to go back to Bobby Kennedy in the years following his brother's death to find a contemporary politician so unafraid of being serious and so able to convey that seriousness to whites and blacks alike. □

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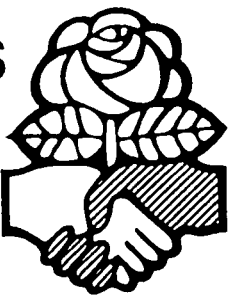

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Charles Knight

THE LEFT AND THE MILITARY

The American left has proved very adept at identifying the misuses of American military power and the distortion of national priorities that defense spending has entailed. But despite the left's consistent attention to military matters, it lacks a coherent approach to military policy. At best, the left has an *inclination* on military issues—and that inclination has been consistently *anti-military*. This does not preclude banging the drum occasionally for select interventions. But it does mean that whenever the left relates to military policy, it relates as an outsider; it relates as though the realm of military policy is unremittingly hostile to progressive values. But a progressive military policy is both possible and necessary—necessary to the achievement of progressive goals and to the credibility of the left in American politics.

I begin from the premise that military force is sometimes justified and that the problem of war does not arise solely because of the policies of any single state or group of states. Instead, the most fundamental cause of war today is the anarchic international system in which states are free to pursue their interests by means of military force. Within this system all states, big and small, exist in some degree of basic insecurity.

I also assume that the mere existence of complicating factors—domestic repression, dirty hands—cannot excuse aggression, or strip the victim country of its right to self-defense, or relieve a group of nations of the moral responsibility to aid victims of aggression. Hence, in this view, it would have been proper for the United States, France, and England to come to the aid of Poland when it was attacked by Nazi Germany *even though* the Polish regime was at the time a dictatorship and *even though* the United States, France, and England were far short of benevolent in their international relations.

What is lost when the left remains outside the military policy debate? In 1992 Colin Powell, head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under George Bush, drafted a new national strategy, now largely accepted by the Clinton Pentagon. Although the national strategy makes passing reference to the importance of multinational alliances and UN mandates, it is fundamentally unilateralist. By calling for the capacity to fight two major wars without reliance on significant coalitional help, the strategy requires very large U.S. forces. By setting goals of extraordinarily quick, decisive victory it requires emphasis on active duty forces and massive strategic air- and sealifts.

National strategies, by design, are very general statements, but they set the framework for debate. Before he released his "Bottom Up Review" of military requirements last year, then-Secretary of Defense Les Aspin floated the idea of "win-hold-win" sequencing of the two-war strategy: fight and win the first war, while stalemating the second; then fight and win the second. This strategy, which reflects the low probability that the United States will have to fight two wars at once, left the door open to a reduction in force size. However, Aspin was immediately attacked from the right, and he retreated to a formula of "fighting and winning two wars near simultaneously," and Clinton has since pledged not to reduce forces below the levels recommended in the Bottom Up Review.

Defensive wars are almost always fought in a "hold-win" sequence, the allied strategy in the

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Second World War being a prominent twentieth-century example. Seeking the capacity for an early offensive "win" option in two theaters is radically ambitious and extravagant. One measure of this ambition is the current plan to deploy a force of nearly five Army divisions anywhere in the world in eight weeks. Operation Desert Storm was the fastest large-scale logistics feat in history; it took twelve weeks to deploy such a force then. The new strategy seeks to better by one-third the Desert Storm deployment time.

Given the low level of objective threats to U.S. interests in the post–cold war world and mindful of other national needs, we can find a large area of very reasonable strategy options for the left to counterpoise. The left, however, remains conspicuously absent from the policy discussion. By default, conservatives have controlled public debate about the great question of post–cold war national strategy.

Toward a Progressive Military Policy

Several goals would distinguish a progressive military policy. The first is an effort to effect structural guarantees that armed forces will be properly used—that is, with restraint and for truly defensive ends. Second is an effort to ensure that the maintenance of a strong military is met in ways consistent with progress toward other national goals—such as fiscal responsibility and the meeting of human needs. Finally, a progressive military policy would aim to meet today's defense needs in ways that help create global conditions in which nations can confidently attempt a general demilitarization.

The left has often stood ready to restrain military power, cut military spending, and support alternative global and nonmilitary security mechanisms. My point, however, is that progress toward these ends (1) requires a comprehensive engagement with military policy, and (2) cannot be achieved apart from an effort to ensure that the military remains able to fulfill the fundamental function of deterring and defeating aggression.

The United States military is a very large, multipurpose, and complex institution. The set of policies applicable to it is correspondingly large and complex, covering issues of national military strategy, doctrine, operational concepts, force size, force structure, roles, missions, military modernization, and personnel. There is no tradition in the American left of argument about any of these issues—although it is at this level of discourse that military capabilities and budgets are determined. Left opposition to military priorities has most often been expressed as a consistent opposition to new weapon purchases. But without a comprehensive vision of how a military should operate, budget cutting arguments remain fundamentally weak. Worse yet, they can give the appearance of lack of concern for the lives of American soldiers and the security of the nation.

An effort to achieve any positive end in military policy must respect this area of policy as an integrated whole. Two current issues illustrate the point: the question of "active-reserve mix" in the United States military and the debate over armed forces roles and missions.

The Future of Armed Forces Reserves

Only in recent years has the United States maintained large professional standing armies in peacetime. After the Second World War large Soviet forces remained in Eastern Europe. To support the defense of Western Europe, the United States needed active duty forces that could move into combat in days and weeks rather than the months necessary to mobilize reserve forces. The dissolution of the Soviet threat makes it reasonable to transfer part of the force structure to the reserves. Nonetheless, current planning keeps the active force component at nearly the same proportion as during the cold war; it will move down only 3 percent from its 1990 level of 65 percent.

The proponents of large active forces who now dominate policy making argue that the reserves are not prepared for combat maneuver missions in the first several months of a crisis. The underlying assumption is that large combat forces must be ready to go on the offensive early in a future war. However, in the new international environment even significantly

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smaller active forces can hold a defensive line until reserves are ready to be deployed.

The continuing emphasis on active duty forces is flawed and dangerous. The left has an opportunity to speak out for the ideal of a citizens' army or militia—in today's form, the National Guard and other service reserves. Putting more emphasis on reserves would not only save tens of billions of dollars a year, it would also put a constraint on the capacity of political leaders to go to war without the backing of the American people. Greater reliance on the reserves would serve the goals of both economy and democracy.

The Roles and Mission Debate

Closely related to the issue of active–reserve "force mix" is the issue of armed forces roles and missions—the allocation of combat tasks among the various service branches. The definition of roles is particularly important in evaluating structural redundancies among the services.

While progressives have remained fixated on achieving savings by challenging the cost effectiveness of individual weapon systems, they have paid far less attention to the much larger problem of structural redundancy. Emblematic of this problem is the existence of four United States air forces. In 1993 General Colin Powell used a semantic distinction to dismiss this issue, stating that "America has one air force—the U.S. Air Force . . . other services have aviation arms." But few nations have air forces as large as the "aviation arms" of the United States Navy and Marine Corps. And few nations have armies as large as America's second army—the Marine Corps.

Being a good chairman, Powell sought to close an issue that could set off a revolt of generals and admirals. From the perspective of national interest, however, continuation of the status quo has nothing to do with maintaining a quality fighting force and everything to do with squandering scarce resources. Addressing the problems of service autonomy, rivalry, and redundancy would help us to lower defense expenditures and to field an effective fighting force. It would also help open a debate about national strategy and the proper use of military forces.

Role of the United Nations

The left has usually denied that U.S. military power can play a positive role in the world. Many on the left, however, admit exceptions: the Second World War, or, currently, intervention in Bosnia or Haiti. If indeed there are, from a progressive perspective, instances when the resort to military action is justified, then it is incumbent on the left to join the debate on when and how force should be used.

Today that debate is more open than at any time in recent history. The Gulf War marked a new, although fragile, precedent for large-scale U.S. interventions. Despite the continuing preference of U.S. leaders for the freedom of unilateral action, America's declining economic power and global trends toward interdependent international relations make multilateralism increasingly attractive in the post–cold war era. This will mean that the United States will try to organize coalitions or rely on alliances to pursue large-scale interventions.

This is a positive direction for United States foreign policy. With more countries involved in coalition decision making, war objectives will probably be more limited and large-scale intervention less frequent. We can expect that through the practice of multilateralism norms of intervention and coalition warfare will develop, although at first these will not be codified as law or applied consistently. Nevertheless, a process that moves beyond the singular prerogative of U.S. power toward global norms of acceptable behavior represents progress and a significant opening for the left.

The next level of development of a global security apparatus may be the creation of a multinational "peacemaking" force under UN command. However, the UN is far from ready to assume such a role, and most nations are not yet prepared to cede it to the UN. A host of serious practical problems blocks consensus. Unless they are addressed, the prospects for a

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significant global peacemaking force will wither under a barrage of "realist" skepticism.

Among the problems facing a UN command are issues of command and control, doctrine, division of labor, and cooperation among diverse national armed forces. Would a UN force that is truly multinational be able to act in an efficient and timely fashion? An affirmative answer is possible, but it depends on deepening the discussion of organizational and operational issues.

So far the "realist" and "unilateralist" opposition to UN development has monopolized the discussion of these issues. Progressives, by contrast, have been badly overtaken by events. Although often supportive of greater reliance on the UN, the left has been unable to address many of the practical problems that recent experience has revealed.

Defensive Restructuring

In international relations theory, the *security dilemma* posits that measures to improve one nation's security will tend to diminish another's. This is particularly true if Nation A's defense strategy calls for a retaliatory offensive against Nation B. Strong offensive capabilities may make Nation A *feel* more secure, but they will make Nation B feel less secure, with a number of undesirable consequences: (1) tensions will increase if Nation B reciprocates with an offensive strategy of its own; (2) instability will grow as disproportionate investments in offensive capabilities make the defenses of both nations less reliable; and (3) military competition will stimulate increased acquisition of armaments and increased investment in military technology.

Defensive restructuring seeks to alleviate the security dilemma by limiting a nation's capabilities for cross-border attack, improving its capacity to resist aggression, and discouraging arms races. The concept of a defensively oriented military represents a break with the dominant trend in security policy, which stresses punitive deterrence and, in the event of war, a quick transition to large-scale offensive action. By contrast, a defensively structured military would seek to deter aggression principally by lowering an aggressor's probability of success. Should deterrence fail, it would seek to contain and exhaust aggression while avoiding escalation.

By relinquishing the threat of large-scale cross-border offensive action, a "defensive defense" reduces the pressures for escalation. In this way, it increases the scope of diplomacy and helps create an atmosphere of trust without compromising national security. And because this approach seeks to build on the inherent strengths of a defensive posture, it can provide security at lower cost.

Defensive restructuring is not, primarily, a matter of banning "offensive weaponry." An effective armed force needs to be able to carry out tactical defense *and* offense and must have the requisite units, weaponry and training. What matters is how the units are put together, the operational doctrine, and the national strategy. This is a complex mix, but it is not so complex that it defies meaningful analysis or policy development.

Several avenues of defensive restructuring can be encouraged through arms control, arms transfer, and military assistance policies. First, nations can move in informal concert to modernize their armed forces along non-offensive lines. Second, nations can negotiate measures that selectively limit those weapons most vital to large-scale offensive action. Finally, arms-exporting nations can agree to limit the transfer of offense-oriented systems, while leaving uncontrolled the transfer of systems vital to defense.

Comprehensive defensive restructuring for global or inter-regional military powers, such as the United States, Britain, France, or Russia, is a special issue. Their militaries all have the capacity to "project" power far from their borders—a primary offensive characteristic. Rigorous defensive restructuring would involve a dramatic rollback in their capabilities and entail their abstention from unilateral military activism. This is an appealing goal, but its realization will likely require both the prior evolution of global security agencies and a broad-based defensive restructuring of national militaries.

Nonetheless, the major powers could begin

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limiting their offensive forces in a number of stabilizing ways. Such forces could be refashioned for "defensive support" missions with the aim of bolstering the defenses of smaller nations threatened by aggression. To address concerns about military hegemony, the major powers could design their defensive support units to be structurally dependent on the defensive forces of host nations. As a further confidence-building measure such defensive support missions should be strictly multinational in character and under the auspices of global agencies.

Political Importance of Military Policy

The American left has played a leading role in objecting to the abusive exercise of American military power. On several occasions it has made a critical difference: Vietnam is the most prominent recent example. Although these efforts to deny options to political elites have been partially successful, they have not brought about lasting improvements in the political prospects of the left. Left advance requires supplementing the familiar reactive stance of protest with a positive vision of a military policy for the United States.

Today a centrist Democrat occupies the White House. His defense policies are barely distinguishable from those of his conservative Republican predecessor. The election of a progressive who would set a fundamentally different course is a distant prospect. But we can be certain no progressive will be elected unless the American people are convinced that the left takes their security concerns seriously.

These concerns do not reflect a simple or precise calculation. In an increasingly interdependent world with rapid communications and travel, even remote threats can seem too close for comfort. This sense of insecurity also stirs a desire for a moral force in the world—something that can respond to aggression and contain the madness of war. Left and right continually contend to define the source of insecurity and the nature of that moral force.

Twice in recent times the American left succeeded in defining the public terms of security policy discourse. Once was during the Vietnam era, as people began to feel that the real threat was not a distant communism, but rather the continuation of a costly and dangerous war that they neither supported nor understood. The other time was during the Nuclear Freeze movement, when people began to perceive that the real threat to life and morality was the extremism of their own government.

Both the Vietnam War and the Reagan administration's nuclear extremism provided an opening for the left. For the most part the left has filled this opening with a combination of facile anti-militarism that asserts that there are no real military threats and a reflexive anti-interventionism that seems ready to abandon weak nations to the aggression of others. Such reactive stances only serve to undercut the left's moral credibility.

Today the world stands poised between a past in which nations sought to ensure their security primarily through armed deterrence and exclusive military alliances and a future in which inclusive global agencies and nonmilitary means can play the leading role in guaranteeing the peace. Yet instability and conflict continue to beset many regions of the world. We require a transitional security policy—one that attends to immediate security concerns using the tools at hand while forging new tools that can carry the world into a realm of greater freedom. A comprehensive military policy from the left can assuage people's fears and offer progress toward a higher moral ground. Whether or not the left is up to this challenge depends on its capacity to outgrow its old habits of thought. □

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Georgia Warnke

SURROGATE MOTHERING AND THE MEANING OF FAMILY

The debate over surrogate mothering is often seen as a debate over the meaning of motherhood and the status of women in general. Both court decisions and the writings of feminist theorists center on questions about the value of mothering, the proper role of women as mothers and citizens, and the putative relations between a woman's reason and her emotional life. I would like to offer an alternative view, however, one that moves the debate away from questions about women to questions about family relations in general.

Surrogacy involves one of two arrangements. In one a woman agrees to be artificially inseminated with the sperm of a man in order to bear a child for him and his wife. The so-called sponsoring couple, in turn, agree to compensate her for her services. In the other, eggs are harvested from one woman, fertilized in a petri dish by her husband's sperm, and implanted in the womb of another woman. She brings the resulting fetus to term and is again compensated for her services.

For some, the important fact about such services is that they allow women to assert their bodily autonomy and to claim jurisdiction over their own procreative power. In supplying a womb and, in most cases, the egg that grows there, women provide sterile couples with the same service male semen donors provide. Hence, they ought to be compensated in the same way. For others, however, pay for pregnancy, and this equation with a particularly alienated form of fatherhood, involves a devaluing of motherhood. Moreover, it is a form of exploitation in which middle- and upper-middle-class couples fulfill their most fundamental desires by commodifying the bodies of poorer women and buying their babies as merchandise.

The presumption on both sides of this debate is that the issue of surrogate mothering centers on women. Once we give women their due both as equal citizens and as mothers, we will know how to conceive of contract pregnancies. Either they promote women's equality or they obstruct it. Either they encourage women's value as nurturers or they deny it. But suppose the key question that surrogate mothering raises has less to do with women than with the character of family relationships. I do not mean to underwrite a neoconservative rehabilitation of "family values." Still, arguing the issue of surrogate mothering only in relation to issues of women's economic rights or prerogatives as mothers promotes more conflicts than it resolves. In contrast, aspects of our understanding of the meaning of family seem to suggest a path toward compromise. In order to show how this might be so, we can start with the "Baby M" case, the crucial example of surrogate mothering for most Americans.

Surrogacy and "Baby M"

In February 1985, Mary Beth Whitehead and her then-husband, Richard Whitehead, contracted with William Stern to bear a child conceived of Mary Beth Whitehead's egg and William Stern's sperm. According to the terms of the agreement, Whitehead was to be artificially inseminated with semen collected

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from Stern. Whitehead was to carry any resulting fetus to term and was not to obtain an abortion except at the wishes of Stern. Neither Whitehead nor her husband were to "form or attempt to form" a parent-child relationship with any child she conceived under the terms of the agreement; both were to terminate all their parental rights upon the birth of such a child and, moreover, "to sign all necessary affidavits prior to and after the birth of the child and voluntarily participate in any paternity proceedings necessary to have William Stern's name entered on said child's birth certificate as the natural or biological father." In return "for services and expenses," William Stern was to pay the Whiteheads $10,000 upon the birth of a live child as well as all medical, hospitalization, and pharmaceutical expenses not covered by the Whiteheads' insurance policy. If Whitehead miscarried before the fifth month of a pregnancy, she was to receive no compensation other than expenses; if a child were stillborn, she was to receive $1,000 in addition to expenses. Finally, if William Stern died either before or after the birth of a child under the terms of the agreement, that child was to be placed in the custody of his wife, Elizabeth Stern.[1]

On March 26, 1986, Whitehead gave birth to a baby girl and, deciding to keep the child, reneged on the terms of the surrogacy agreement. The Sterns went to court and were granted temporary custody on May 5, 1986. Whitehead left New Jersey with the baby and disappeared for three months. Upon her reappearance, the baby was placed in the Sterns's custody. On March 31, 1987, the New Jersey court upheld the validity of the surrogacy contract, awarded full custody to the Sterns, allowed Elizabeth Stern legally and immediately to adopt the child, and terminated Whitehead's parental rights. On February 8, 1988, however, the New Jersey Supreme Court reversed the lower court on the legality of the contract, restoring Whitehead's parental rights and granting her visitation rights but allowing the Sterns to retain custody in the "best interest" of the child.

The Court found "the payment of money to a 'surrogate' mother illegal" since it was for "the sale of a child or, at the very least, the sale of a mother's right to her child. . . ." And it continued:

> Under the contract, the natural mother is irrevocably committed before she knows the strength of her bond with her child. She never makes a totally voluntary, informed decision, for quite clearly any decision prior to the baby's birth is, in the most important sense, uninformed, and any decision after that, compelled by a pre-existing contractual commitment, the threat of a lawsuit, and the inducement of a $10,000 payment, is less than totally voluntary. . . .

The court also considered the effects on the child both of not living with her natural mother and of discovering that her mother gave birth to her "only to obtain money." Finally, it discussed Whitehead's predicament: "She was guilty of a breach of contract, and indeed, she did break a very important promise, but we think it is expecting something well beyond normal human capabilities to suggest that this mother should have parted with her newly born infant without a struggle. Other than survival, what stronger force is there?"[2]

For some feminists, this decision was a victory for the rights of mothers to keep their children. But for others, it seemed to belong to a long history of attempts to control women's reproductive capabilities. The response to artificial insemination by donor (or A.I.D.), of which surrogate mothering remains a species, is a case in point. In 1921, a Canadian court equated A.I.D. with adultery, claiming that the real crime of adultery involved "the possibility of introducing into the family of the husband a false strain of blood."[3] In 1954, the Superior Court for Cook County agreed, calling A.I.D. "contrary to public policy and good morals" and defining it as adultery on the part of the mother. "Succession through blood descent," the Feversham Committee in England declared in 1960, "is an important element of family life and as such is at the basis of our society. On it depend the peerage and other titles of honour and the Monarchy itself."[4] Any children issuing from A.I.D. were to be considered illegitimate, and the entry of the mother's husband's name in the Registry of Births was to be condemned.

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In practice, artificial insemination by donor required secrecy. Exploring the practice in 1957, A.M.C.M. Schellen called for strict anonymity on the part of donors, as well as for concerted attempts by doctors to match a donor's physical characteristics with those of the husband and an absolute prohibition against informing the children thus conceived as to the method of their conception. Were secrecy not maintained, Schellen and other medical ethicists warned, not only might the courts consider the child illegitimate, but a woman undergoing artificial insemination by donor might transfer her affections to the donor, and her husband might pursue him in a jealous rage. Meanwhile, opponents of A.I.D. argued that "the true human love of a woman expressed itself in wanting her husband's child" only, while the desire for "just a child" reflected an animal urge.[5] Accordingly, Schellen called any *unmarried* woman who wanted a child through artificial insemination "guilty of ruthless selfishness" and, he went on, she could "have little true love in her heart."[6]

If the desire to bear any child, as opposed to the desire to bear one's husband's child, is evidence of an animal urge, what must be evidenced by the desire to bear a "donor's" child one does not even intend to keep? If the artificial insemination of a married woman who wants to bear and keep a child is tainted with the connotation of adultery, how must the artificial insemination of a surrogate be tainted? Schellen called it "artificial prostitution."[7] But the flip side of understanding surrogate mothering as artificial prostitution is defining the legitimate feelings and desires of "honest" women. Honest women cannot be interested in leasing out their reproductive capacities; nor can they want to enter into agreements that affect the most tender aspect of their being. If they are forced into such agreements by circumstances beyond their control, it would be unreasonable to expect them to abide by the promises they make. Honest women have true love in their hearts, and they never put selfish economic considerations before the claims of affection.

But this reasoning bears a suspicious similarity to that of the New Jersey Supreme Court. In a sense, by being unable to comply with the terms of the surrogacy contract, Whitehead redeemed herself. She was to receive payment for the sale of a mother's right to her child. But a birth mother cannot know "the strength of her bond with her child" before it is born. Indeed, no force is stronger. Hence, no (real) woman can make an informed decision to sell her rights to her child prior to its birth. Nor can she do so afterward given the threat of a lawsuit and the monetary inducement provided by the surrogacy fee. Rather, she is swayed by influences and fears, whether rational or not, that cause her (weak and emotional as she is) to act against her long-term interests. The promise Whitehead broke is a promise no real or honest woman could be expected to keep. Only "artificial prostitutes" devoid of true human love could keep it, and by reneging on her promise, Whitehead merely proved her status as an honest woman.

But if these implications of the New Jersey Supreme Court's decision comply with a history of stereotypical views of women's needs and natural motherhood, what about the lower court's ruling? At first glance, it seems both to uphold the personal liberty of a couple to form a family and to justify a surrogate's freedom to choose to perform her services under a contract. If a surrogate father is allowed under the law to sell his sperm, a surrogate mother must, as a matter of equal protection, be allowed to sell *her* reproductive services. Moreover, since monetary damages could not possibly compensate William Stern for the loss of his child, the court required Whitehead's specific compliance to the terms of the contract she had signed.

But the lower court's reasoning can be understood to follow from the same ideas about women and surrogacy as the New Jersey Supreme Court's decision. Surrogate mothers typically describe their motivations for entering into pregnancy contracts with childless couples as, at least in part, altruistic ones. They depict their actions as attempts to perform a good

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deed for others and to give something of themselves, in light of which the monetary gain is entirely secondary. Such self-descriptions might be seen as attempts to lift surrogate mothering out of the subhuman domain of "artificial prostitution" and into the more respectable domain in which women's traditional tenderness and concern for others holds sway.

The outrage the lower court in the Baby M case evinced when Whitehead tried to renege on the surrogacy contract seems to follow. The court did not simply uphold the validity of the surrogacy contract; it also vilified Whitehead, questioning her child-rearing methods, her relations to her other children, and even her sanity. Here it relied on the expert testimony of psychologists such as Dr. Marshall Schecter, who attributed to Whitehead a "Mixed Personality Disorder." The evidence for this diagnosis was in part that she handed the baby out of a window to her husband to avoid the baby's being taken by the Sterns, in part that she dyed her prematurely white hair, in part that she was the dominant force in her marriage, and in part that she discussed paying off debts that Schecter doubted she could pay off, given her and her husband's "present vocational and educational training." When Schecter also claimed that she played "patty cake" incorrectly and mistakenly gave the baby stuffed animals to play with instead of pots and pans, a group of women and feminists released a letter to the press declaring that "by these standards we are all unfit mothers."[8]

Nevertheless, the vitriolic response of the court and its expert witnesses may have stemmed in part from the surprising selfishness Whitehead's actions seemed to reflect. If surrogates are meant to be selfless women to whom monetary compensation is a secondary good, then their selfishness in trying to keep the child they eventually bear is deeply troubling. In making an arrangement with a surrogate, a contracting couple implicitly relies not simply on her desire to earn money but on her willingness to help. In trying to keep the child, the surrogate proves that she is not interested in the money, but that she is not interested in helping either. Her actions thus cannot be understood as those of a "real" woman. Hence, if a surrogacy contract is upheld, it may not be for the reason some feminists would support, because it enhances women's freedom and autonomy, but rather because the traditional role of women in providing for the good of others requires that they sacrifice their own interests in this instance as in all others.

Indeed, the ambiguities to be gleaned from the two courts' decisions in the "Baby M" case have been repeated in more recent feminist debates over the issue. For some feminists, the traditional orientation of women toward the good of others is a source of moral strength. Moreover, this morality is taken to tip the balance of the argument against surrogacy arrangements instead of for contractual compliance. Woman's morality cries out against severing a surrogate's bond to her child or demanding, as the Stern-Whitehead contract demanded, that she not even form such a bond. Rather, the sustaining and strengthening of human bonds lies at the core of a general ethical response to others and holds, as well, of a mother's relation to the fetuses she carries to term.

From this point of view, what is crucial to any pregnancy is the way in which it forms an embodied relationship, one that is necessarily stronger than any external relationship between a sponsoring couple or even a father and a fetus. Children "enter the world in a relationship," Barbara Katz Rothman writes, "a physical, and social and emotional relationship with the woman in whose body they have been nurtured."[9] In contrast, as the philosopher Elizabeth Anderson continues, surrogacy arrangements commodify this nurturing labor by subsuming it under production-line values appropriate to the creation of saleable merchandise, thereby underestimating the value owed to the ongoing relationship between mother and fetus. Surrogates are not supposed to form the kinds of attachments to their fetuses that are a proper component of our social practices surrounding pregnancy. For their part, the children of surrogates are denied what is due

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them: to be loved and cherished by their parents rather than being used for "personal advantage" or treated as a commercial product.[10]

But if a woman's voice in ethics thus seems unequivocally to oppose the validity of pregnancy contracts, it is noteworthy that the feminist legal scholar Carmel Shalev turns precisely to notions of sustaining and strengthening human bonds in her case *for* the validity of surrogacy contracts. According to Shalev, the linchpin of an ethics sustaining human bonds is responsibility for self and others, a concern with the network of relationships in which one is embedded rather than a concern solely with one's own individual rights. Responsibility means responsibility for one's decisions and commitments in the social context in which they are made. Hence, in Shalev's view, surrogacy contracts must be understood as results of the responsible decisions of responsible agents thinking through and acting in a network of relationships.[11]

If we contrast Anderson and Shalev we seem to confront again the opposition of the two New Jersey courts. Either surrogacy arrangements devalue women's morality and the proper attachment of birth mother and child, as Anderson and the New Jersey Supreme Court believe, or they adequately represent both women's concern for the good of others and their freedom of contract, as Shalev and the lower court argue. How are we to resolve this apparent impasse? Suppose we try to do so by focusing, not on the meaning of mothering or the status of women, but rather on the character of family relationships.

Family Relationships

Fundamental to Shalev's defense of surrogacy is the expression of intent. Those individuals who express the intention to become parents—whether through traditional means, through adoption, contracting with a surrogate, or agreeing to artificial insemination—count as the real parents and the responsible parties in the web of relationships they create. They must be the decision makers; their intentions and decisions are the ones that must be supported by law. In the case of surrogate mothering, this requirement means that pregnancy contracts must be considered valid and courts can require specific compliance. It also means that the "sponsoring couple" takes over responsibility for any children resulting from the surrogacy agreement. Hence, in cases in which a fetal abnormality is detected, it is the sponsoring couple's decision whether or not the pregnancy should be terminated. In the event that a baby is born with significant deformities, the sponsoring parents cannot themselves renege on the pregnancy contract. They can, of course, release the child for adoption, as can any couple, but they remain legally responsible for the child until they do so.[12]

But this intentional view of parenting has some odd consequences, even aside from the question of whether it deprives the surrogate of her constitutional right to an abortion by transferring this decision to the sponsoring couple. For example, on Shalev's view it does not seem that a biological father can be required to support his child financially unless he specifically agrees to or intends to function as the child's father. Child support might legitimately be required of fathers (or "deadbeat dads") who have explicitly or tacitly expressed their intention to enter into a father-child relation. But fathers could not be legally compelled, as they are under current law, to support children whom they fathered but never intended to father.

This odd result of Shalev's view illuminates an important aspect of our understanding of the meaning of a family, however. For the idea that birth fathers should help support their children whether they intended to have them or not rests on the idea that families, even nontraditional families, constitute sets of relations that are not always intended or chosen. We do not choose our children or our parents any more than we choose the person with whom we fall in or out of love. We do not become pregnant just because we decide or intend to do so; nor can we yet control the sex of our children or pick their personalities.

To be sure, we are able to realize some intentions with regard to some of these factors, and emerging birth technologies promise more

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intentional control than we have had thus far. We can try to decide when not to be pregnant by using various methods of birth control or by having an abortion. We can decide to have little to do with the people who turn out to be our parents, and we can narrow the range of possibilities for falling in love. We can also take positive action to fall in love or become pregnant, and we can rely on the medical profession or singles associations to help if we are having trouble.

Still, none of these strategies are fail-safe. And this lack of ultimate control seems, in fact, to correspond to a significant aspect of our understanding of family. For although Shalev's conception of contracting to be a parent rests on the intentions and control of sponsoring parties, at least part of what it means to have or belong to a family is just to lose control. Families are less things that we create or contract into than relationships or the consequences of relationships that happen to us both as parents and, perhaps more obviously, as children. As parents, our responsibility for our children, whether we discharge it by raising them as best we can or by trying to secure a better home for them than the one we can supply, does not depend on our original intention to have or not to have them. It depends only on the children's existence, and this seems to be the state of families in general. Whether we intend them or not, exercise our procreative rights or not, give birth to the children we imagined or not, the salient fact about a family is not the intentions—and thus not the contractual control—that may or may not initiate it. Rather the salient fact about a family is simply that it is there.

But if families are relationships that happen to us rather than entities that we intend or contractually control, as Shalev assumes, it seems odd to legislate the proper form those relationships are supposed to take—as notions of true motherhood or of the proper relation between child and mother do. Certainly a mother cannot know what her bond to her child will be before it is born, as the New Jersey Supreme Court notices. But the bond with her infant seems only the beginning of what she cannot know. If a surrogate mother cannot know that she will not feel a powerful bond with the fetus she is carrying or the child to whom she gives birth, a mother who intends to keep her children cannot know that she *will* feel such a powerful bond.

Of course, she may "intend" to feel a connection and it may be proper that she does, as Anderson maintains, or specifically proscribed, as the Stern-Whitehead pregnancy contract demanded. In neither case, however, are family relationships dictated by what philosophers or lawyers find proper and correct. Rather, it seems to be a crucial aspect of their meaning that they spill out beyond anything we can control, intend, or imagine. In one case, the strength of a surrogate's bond with her newborn infant may make it impossible for her to surrender it as agreed upon. In another case, the continuing strength of her commitment to other goals may mean that it is not difficult at all.

But if at least part of the meaning of family relationships is that they go beyond our intentions, then these results would seem to follow. Parents have children for all sorts of reasons and value them in all sorts of ways, whether they expected to or not. Why might a woman, then, not be a very different kind of mother to the children she lives with, those she gives up for adoption, and those she bears for others?

At issue in the question of surrogacy is less the strength or the proper direction of a woman's emotions than the strength and non-intentional character of family relationships in general. Because we recognize that these relationships can evade our intentions, we do not require couples to remain married even though they have signed a contract to do so. On this ground alone, it is unclear how we could hold surrogate mothers to a higher standard. But it is also unclear how we could prohibit surrogacy contracts as a mode of improper valuation. Certainly, some modes of relating to children or discharging our responsibility toward them are morally unsustainable. Still, it remains entirely unclear what makes surrogacy one of these.

But then what are we to do when a surrogate tries to keep the child she formerly agreed to relinquish and the "sponsoring parents" refuse to give up their claim on it? What about Baby M? In this case, custody remains with the Sterns but Mary Beth Whitehead has liberal visitation rights.

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If we begin with the idea that family relationships are unintended and that we must respect some of the different paths family relationships can take, we might accept this as a supportable outcome. Indeed, why not admit that the child might have two mothers and even two fathers and that all the parties involved might learn to cope and even flourish with that arrangement? It would not have been one they intended, but they might get on with it nonetheless.

This sort of solution seems to be the one a Vermont court chose (in sharp contrast to other recent custody cases, such as those of Jessica Deboer or Kimberly Mays) in settling the recent adoption case of "Baby Pete." In this instance, a woman became pregnant by her husband in the midst of divorcing him. Deceitfully claiming that her current boyfriend was the baby's father, she severed her parental rights and gave the child up for adoption without her former husband's knowledge. Upon learning of the existence of a son, the father sued to regain custody. The court compromised, leaving physical custody with the adoptive mother and granting legal custody to the birth father.

This solution seems to comply with much of what we consider a family to be, something that is either entirely unintended or, in any case, surpasses any intentions we could have had. Hence, it also takes seriously another idea: namely that we need not sever some relationships in order to guarantee the strength of others. What open adoption, surrogacy, and new birth technologies seem to ask us to reject is not our ordinary understanding of a family, but rather an outmoded part of it according to which a family properly consists only of biological parents and their children. Where this situation is not possible it must be pretended, by closing adoption records, keeping semen donor identities secret, and preventing the children of A.I.D. from finding out about their births. But why might not one's family be defined as that group of people who have a special concern for one, those that actually do have the "calling" or commitment to one that some writers think anyone bringing a pregnancy to term *must* have. Certainly, this idea is involved in our colloquial use of the notion of family. In the general case, the set of people with this special concern may be one's nuclear family, whether related biologically or by adoption. But in other cases, this set might involve one's custodial parents and one's biological parent or one's custodial parents and the woman who served as their "surrogate," or one's two lesbian mothers together with their sperm donor.

The point here is that the law should not determine which relationships we can have to which people. Rather, it should try to understand and facilitate the relationships we already have. Our guiding question might be how the laws and principles we construct help us to cope with relationships we may never have intended but that are integral to other relationships we may also not have intended but from which it would be devastating for us to be cut off. These relationships may not be those simply between parent and child. Rather, for a surrogate mother who finds herself in a relationship with a baby she meant to bear for others, the function of the law might be that of helping her to continue with that relationship and to forge a relationship with the sponsoring couple while, at the same time, helping the sponsoring couple relate to her. For the biological father of a child whose mother put it up for adoption without telling him of its existence, the function of law might be the same: that of helping the man recognize the custodial relation between the child and its adoptive parents and helping them to recognize his biological relation to it. None of the complex connections at stake here between parent and child or sets of parents might have been intended. But if law or moral principle has any role in this predicament, it should help us muddle through the network of connections that has happened to us, since this is both what a family is and what we have to do in any case.

Contested surrogacy agreements as well as contested custody arrangements indicate the extent to which relationships thwart our original expectations. In certain cases such as wife-battering, child abuse, and parental neglect, we require the legal system to enforce restraining orders and set restrictions on the possible contact between members of a family. The law must restrict relationship in these cases, but that does not mean it

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should restrict it in all others. Controversies over custody in surrogacy as well as divorce and adoption cases often bring two sets of competent parents into opposition. What we require of the law (or moral theory or, indeed, child psychology) in these cases is not some way of deciding which is the more legitimate relationship. Rather, since both already exist, although in different ways, what we need is help in sorting through their complexity and making them work. Why should we not think of family law as the means of helping us to nurture the relationships we have and cannot do without or to cope with the relationships we must have because of other relationships we cannot do without? And why might it not perform this role for us whether we intended to have these relationships or not? □

Notes

1. Phyllis Chesler, *Sacred Bond: The Legacy of Baby M* (Times Books, 1988), Appendix A.
2. References to the New Jersey Supreme Court Decision are taken from Appendix G of *Sacred Bond*.
3. Cited in Carmel Shalev, *Birth Power: The Case for Surrogacy* (Yale University Press, 1989), p. 22.
4. Cited in Gena Corea, *The Mother Machine* (Harper and Row, 1985), p. 47.
5. Cited in *Birth Power*, p. 67.
6. A.M.C.M. Schellen, *Artificial Insemination in the Human* (New York: Ellsevier Publishing Co., 1957), p. 284.
7. Ibid., p. 254.
8. *Sacred Bond*, Appendix D.
9. Barbara Katz Rothman, *Recreating Motherhood: Ideology and Technology in a Patriarchal Society* (W.W. Norton and Co., 1989), p. 242.
10. Elizabeth S. Anderson, "Is Women's Labor a Commodity?" *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Winter 1990), p. 75.
11. *Birth Power*, p. 127.
12. *Birth Power*, p. 98.

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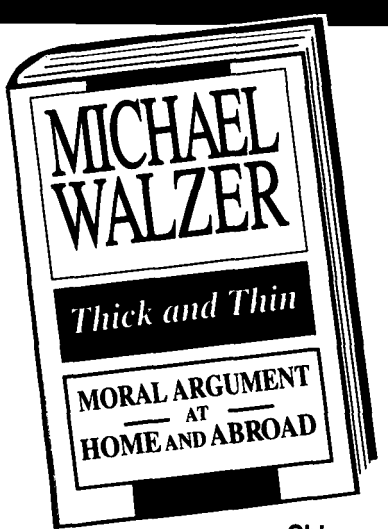

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Dorothy Sue Cobble

LABOR LAW REFORM AND POSTINDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

The Clinton administration's 1993 decision to establish a Commission on the Future of Worker-Management Relations has opened a far-ranging debate about the U.S. collective bargaining system. Organized labor generally argues that its priority should be strengthening workers' rights to organize and bargain under the current system. But most academic commentators—and probably a majority of the commissioners—emphasize the need to foster worker-management cooperation and to extend "employee representation" to the 85 percent of workers without unions.

I for one don't see the two streams of reform as necessarily opposed: workers do deserve greater protections in exercising both their collective and their individual rights to representation. At the same time, all of the most prominent labor law reform proposals have a common failing: they do not fully respond to the representational needs of the new service work force, a majority of whom are women and minorities.

In large part, this failure is a result of a policy discourse mired in the present. Ironically enough—given the ever-mounting stacks of labor history monographs and the flurry of scholarship on "postindustrialism"—neither a sufficient sense of the past nor the future informs the debates over worker representation and labor law reform. It is as if labor history began with the organization of mass production workers in the 1930s. The wide range of representational forms devised by workers before the dominance of New Deal industrial unionism has been forgotten. Paralleling this historical amnesia is a blindness to the dramatic ways in which the employment relationships of today (and tomorrow) differ from those of the recent past. The factory floor can no longer be the sole basis upon which generalizations are made. Our current labor relations system must be reconceived in light of the realities of the new service work force.

Weaknesses of the Industrial Model

The labor relations system dominant since the 1930s and 1940s assumed a long-term full-time commitment to a single employer—a fundamentally "worksite" orientation. Union benefits were tied to individual employers and often limited to long-term, full-time employees.

This worksite orientation clearly is inadequate for the new contingent work force, many of whom are highly mobile and only tenuously attached to a single employer. This contingent work force—part-time, temporary, leased, on-call, subcontracted workers—makes up an estimated 25 percent of the work force, and most experts expect the proportion to rise. A disproportionate number of these workers are female. Women account for almost two-thirds of temporary help services employees, and Diana Pearce estimates that 52 percent of

A more extended version of this essay, "Making Postindustrial Unionism Possible," appeared in *Restoring the Promise of American Labor Law*, ed. by Sheldon Friedman, Richard W. Hurd, Rudolph Oswald, and Ronald Seeber (Ithaca: Cornell University ILR Press, 1994). The research on which this work is based was supported by a grant from the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor.

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women, but only 33 percent of men, work part time or part year.

In addition, firm-based bargaining is not an effective approach for small employers with limited resources. This problem affects women and service workers in particular. In contrast to manufacturing, the service sector (with the exception of governmental services) is often characterized by small firms operating in local competitive markets. And, in the private sector, women are much more likely than men to work for small firms and at worksites with fewer people.

Moreover, many women's jobs in the service sector and throughout the economy are occupationally based, not worksite-based. Women move from employer to employer and from industry to industry more frequently than men do. Women thus rely less on training and promotional opportunities within a firm; they find a better firm or a better employer rather than a better job within the same firm. A collective bargaining system that weds higher wages, benefits, skill upgrading, and employee participation to a specific firm will deny basic employment rights to large numbers of workers, many of whom will be women.

The New Deal labor relations framework is also marred by its adherence to the managerial principles advocated by Frederick Winslow Taylor. Taylorism assumed that production is organized most efficiently through a hierarchically structured, micro-managed workplace with narrow job titles, detailed work rules, and strict separation of managerial and worker functions. In this context, unions were adversaries, not partners with management. In a classic division of labor, management retained authority over the design and organization of work; the union declined (and in some cases was denied) responsibility for supervisory functions, efficiency, and productivity.

As manufacturing shifts toward team work and more flexible computer-based technologies, Taylorist management practices have come under fire. Yet Taylorist notions have always been ill-suited to the realities of the service and white-collar work world, where workers tend to be in situations of close personal contact with their immediate boss. The line between employee and employer is more indistinct than in the traditional blue-collar, mass-production factory; employee-employer relations are largely personal and collaborative rather than adversarial, formalized, and highly bureaucratic.

Management efforts to Taylorize service workers, particularly those involved in direct service encounters, were never as successful or as widespread as in mass production manufacturing. At times, even management realized that friendly service and attentive caring are not best extracted through authoritarian, top-down supervision, and that creativity and problem-solving in white-collar employees cannot be "mandated" from above. Indeed, many non-factory workers, professional and nonprofessional alike, have always engaged in certain "managerial" functions; they work more autonomously or in self-managing teams where the senior member takes responsibility for organizing the flow of work, supervising less skilled co-workers, and maintaining work quality.

Given these realities, a labor relations system that allowed workers to exercise certain managerial prerogatives would be a better match with the practices of service and white-collar workplaces. Organizing and representational processes that emphasized greater participation, less adversarial proceedings, and more consensus-style "win-win" bargaining also would be more appropriate.

Yet efforts to move toward this kind of transformed labor relations system are on a collision course with the Taylorist legacies embedded in our current labor law—a point underscored in the AFL-CIO's recent report, *The New American Workplace: A Labor Perspective* (1994). Under our current legal framework, if unions agree to transform work practices and empower individual workers, they risk bargaining away their members' rights to union representation. The Supreme Court, for example, recently barred a group of licensed practical nurses from organizing because they exercised "independent judgment" in assigning tasks and directing the work of nurses' aides. In the eyes of the court, these

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"supervisory" functions made them ineligible for coverage under the National Labor Relations Act. If this precedent holds, increasing numbers of workers, factory as well as nonfactory, will lose their legal rights to collective representation as we move toward a post-Taylorist workplace.

Why Unionism is Still Necessary

Despite the deep-seated problems with the New Deal framework we have inherited, there are tenets of that same system worth preserving. Let me specify three.

• *First, the old system rightly recognized that collective power for employees was essential for a genuinely collaborative relationship between labor and management.* As Adrienne Eaton and Paula Voos argue in *Unions and Economic Competitiveness*, the most productive partnerships are between those relatively equal in power. Yet the inequities of power between individual employees and their employers have widened since the 1930s. Employee representational schemes that fail to ensure collective employee participation or that create joint committees in which management retains ultimate decision-making authority are out of touch with the realities of today's workplace. Unionism and collective bargaining, albeit as transformed institutions, should remain at the heart of labor policy.

• *Second, the New Deal framework acknowledged the need for adversarial as well as cooperative encounters between employers and employees.* That need still exists. Arrangements that do not provide a way to express conflict and exert pressure for its resolution would deny the fundamental realities of our economic system.

The issue is not how to do away with "adversarialism" but how to minimize unhealthy and unnecessary adversarialism. Unions must be encouraged to accept more responsibility for the health of the enterprises with which they are linked, whether schools, hospitals, or auto factories. Yet the destructive adversarialism that has thrived in the last twenty years has been fueled not just by a limited unionism but by a management culture deeply skeptical of the benefits of power-sharing and democracy at the workplace. The true American exceptionalism, as Sanford Jacoby noted in *Masters to Managers*, is American management's penchant for unilateral control. Public policy must dampen the current adversarial culture by ensuring the institutional security of unions. Introducing "employee participation committees" or plant-level work councils might help close the "representation gap" for those without union representation. But the widening "union gap" between the United States and other industrialized countries must also be closed if these committees are to function effectively and if a realignment of power and decision-making is to occur.

• *Third, strong, autonomous unions act to overcome gender, class, and racial divisions in our society and to further economic justice.* Unionization raises wages more for women and minorities than for white men; it also helps close the gender and race wage gap. Unions with large female constituencies have pushed for pay equity, family and medical leave, and other advantageous policies for women.

Historical and Contemporary Alternatives

Much of the current critique of the New Deal system equates all unionism with the form of unionism that became dominant in the 1940s. Thus, the argument goes, if industrial unionism is obsolete, so is unionism per se. This historical blindness hampers attempts to create new forms of collective representation. Postindustrial unionism does not need to be invented out of whole cloth; rather, we can reshape and extend elements of past and current institutional practice. The practices of what I have termed "occupational unions" and the nontraditional approaches to representation taken by female-dominated groups such as teachers, nurses, and clericals offer the best guide to a postindustrial unionism.

Occupational unionism, the primary model of unionism before the New Deal, was neither Taylorist nor worksite-based. Although not every trade adopted occupational unionism in toto, before the New Deal most organized

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trades, and virtually every trade that successfully organized mobile workers, relied upon some of its elements. Occupational unions recruited and gained recognition on an occupational/local market basis rather than by industry or individual job site; they emphasized occupationally based rights, benefits, and identity rather than worksite-based protections. Longshoremen, janitors, agricultural laborers, food servers, and garment workers, as well as such classic craft unionists as printers, building tradesmen, and performing artists strove for control over hiring through the closed shop and through union-run hiring halls; they stressed employment security rather than "job rights" at an individual worksite; they offered portable benefits and privileges; and they took responsibility for monitoring workplace performance. The line between employee and employer was blurred as well. Not only did unions take responsibility for personnel decisions, but many organizations (teamsters, musicians, retail workers, for example) included supervisors and small employers.

Occupational unionism flourished because it met the needs of workers and employers outside of mass-production settings. In local labor markets populated with numerous small employers, the unionization of garment workers, restaurant employees, teamsters, and others brought stability and inhibited cutthroat competition. Employers gained a steady supply of skilled, responsible labor and an outside agency (the union) that ensured the competence of its members. Workers did not gain long-term job tenure with a single employer, but they did have the opportunity to develop skills and experience in a variety of worksites. This unionism, then, in contrast to industrial unionism, never developed rigid seniority rules at individual worksites. Occupational unionism was committed to maintaining employee productivity, quality service and production, and to ensuring the viability of unionized firms.

Occupational unionism declined dramatically in the postwar era, in part because of shifts in union institutional practice, as I have detailed for the hotel and restaurant industry in *Dishing It Out: Waitresses and Their Unions in the Twentieth Century*. Legislative and legal decisions also took their toll: the closed shop, picketing to gain employer recognition, secondary boycotts, the removal of members from the job for noncompliance with union bylaws and work rules, and union membership for supervisors all became illegal. Unions lost their ability to organize new shops, to maintain multi-employer bargaining structures, to set entrance requirements for the trade, to oversee job performance, and to punish recalcitrant members.

By the 1960s, occupational unionism was a shadow of its former robust self. Only the building and construction trades (which were exempted from some of the postwar restrictions on union activity) and certain specialized professional groups (such as the performing arts occupations) retained some degree of power. Yet by the 1960s other alternatives to mass production unionism were emerging. The professional and semiprofessional employee organizations built primarily by women, for example, initially focused less on extracting economic concessions from individual enterprises than on the well-being of their industry and on responding to the "professional" interests of their members. As state bargaining laws and other forces moved them toward more traditional "bargaining" relations with employers, they shed some of their occupational and associational orientation. Yet, as Charles Kerchner and Douglas Mitchell observe in *The Changing Idea of a Teachers' Union*, many teachers' unions are now moving toward a third stage of labor relations in which they are as concerned with the welfare of the overall educational system as with protecting their own interests. It is these alternative models of unionism that hold promise for the future.

Encouraging Postindustrial Union Alternatives

Of course, the industrial model should not be abandoned wholesale, but it is essential that we begin to think once more in terms of multiple and competing forms of unionism. A single model of labor relations cannot meet the needs of all workers. What transformations in public

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policy would help make possible new unionisms for the postindustrial future?

Expanding the definition of "employee" under the Wagner Act is of primary importance. By my estimates, a third of the private sector work force (some thirty-two million workers) is now explicitly exempted from exercising collective bargaining rights. Domestic and agricultural workers, the self-employed, and others were originally excluded under the Wagner Act in 1935. Later legislation and legal rulings have rescinded the bargaining rights of supervisors, managers, professional employees deemed "managerial," and "confidential" employees (those with access to information considered confidential by the employer). The law must not discriminate against those such as domestic and agricultural workers whose worksites are still linked to the household economy. Nor should categories of workers be excluded simply because they exercise certain "managerial" or "supervisory" responsibilities. In a post-Taylorist workplace, virtually every employee will participate in decisions once thought to be managerial prerogatives.

In addition, many workers are "effectively barred" from collective representation because they have nonstandard employment relations. Many part-timers, temporaries, and other casuals are exempted from participating in NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) elections because they lack a sufficient "community of interest" with "regular" employees.

If workplace democracy is to be retained as employers and employees move away from standard contractual arrangements, public policy should not penalize those who work off-site, on schedules other than full time, or whose tenure is undefined. As Virginia duRivage recommends in *New Policies for the Part-time and Contingent Workforce*, part-time, temporary, and short-term hires should be included in bargaining units based on "the content of their work rather than the classification of their employment."

The problem is not just one of eligibility and expanded coverage but of making it easier for employees to secure contracts with their employers. The most frequently mentioned recommendations include increased penalties for employers who fire union activists, expedited election procedures, enhanced worksite access for union organizers, card-check recognition (which requires employers to bargain once a majority of workers have signed cards favoring unionization), and requiring arbitration when negotiations over a first contract break down—all of which would do much to "level the playing field." Yet more fundamental reforms are required.

If a mobile, decentralized service work force is to gain union representation, unions must once again have the ability to organize "top-down" and to exert many of the economic pressures on employers that were once legal. The millions of nonfactory workers—teamsters, longshoremen, waitresses, cooks, musicians, and others—who successfully organized between the 1930s and the 1950s relied on mass picketing, recognitional picketing (prolonged picketing with the explicit goal of gaining union recognition), secondary boycotts (putting pressure on one employer to cease doing business with another), "hot cargo" agreements (assurances from one employer that "he" will not handle or use the products of another nonunion or substandard employer), and pre-hire agreements (contracts covering *future* as well as current employees)—all tactics now illegal under current labor law. Making them legal again would facilitate the organizing of workers from domestic cleaners to the millions of fast food workers toiling for minimum wages. McDonald's, for example, is unionized in Denmark, Finland, Mexico, Australia, and other countries in large part because of the legality of secondary boycotts and other kinds of economic pressures. Unionized employees at milkshake supply centers, truckers, and printers all helped bring McDonald's to the bargaining table by refusing to produce and deliver goods to the chain.

The law has long made exceptions for the construction trades and other sectors of the economy with high degrees of transience and subcontracting, allowing them to engage in certain kinds of "secondary" economic pressures and exempting them from the prehire or "closed shop" ban. These protections must not

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only be preserved but extended to other occupations and industries.

Yet even when employer recognition is achieved, the small bargaining units typically decreed by the National Labor Relations Board make meaningful bargaining difficult. Decentralized, firm-based bargaining fuels employer resistance by heightening the economic burdens on the few unionized employers. It divides employees, thus weakening their bargaining strength. And it demands an inordinate degree of union staff and resources. The Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, for example, cannot negotiate individual contracts with the thousands of independent and family-owned eating establishments that exist in even one major metropolitan area.

Changes in the law would help remedy this situation. Market-wide, multi-employer bargaining could be encouraged by certifying multi-employer bargaining units, by penalizing employers who withdraw from voluntarily constituted multi-employer agreements, and by implementing "sectoral bargaining" legislation. Sectoral bargaining, as it exists and is being proposed in Canada, mandates that the minimum standards of an agreement be extended to other employers on an industry, occupational, or geographical basis. Broader-based bargaining would also be facilitated by removing the restrictions on the economic weapons allowed to labor. Increasing the power of unions has often meant that employers—especially small employers in highly competitive markets—voluntarily sought multi-employer bargaining.

For a unionism suited to the postindustrial work force to be born, our labor laws and institutions must move beyond an enterprise or worksite-based orientation. Let me give some further examples of how this might translate into concrete policy.

• First, most proposals for enhancing joint decision-making and employee participation recommend giving increased responsibilities for training, quality control, and other personnel matters to employee teams at individual worksites. More responsibility needs to be placed in the hands of employee associations that operate across enterprises, representing members on a market, geographical, or occupational basis.

• Second, more attention could be paid to the promotion of statutes that raise wages and secure benefits for employees on a nonenterprise basis. To give one example, prevailing wage legislation (such as the Davis Bacon Act or the Service Contract Act) should be extended to additional sectors of the economy. Prevailing wage legislation—requiring that all employers pay wages and benefits equal to those prevailing in a given area—establishes a floor below which wages and benefits cannot fall. It discourages a reliance on wage cutting as the prime competitive strategy, and it provides institutional stability for unions by lowering employer resistance to unionization.

• Third, the historic commitment of the occupational unions to providing employment and income security rather than merely guaranteeing job security at an individual worksite should be revived. Occupational unions fostered employment and income security by taking responsibility for employee competence and productivity and by promoting the health and viability of unionized employers. These practices helped preserve high-wage, union jobs by creating employer incentives to unionize.

The occupational unions also pushed for broad-based bargaining structures and union-run hiring halls to protect the employment security of their members. The benefits of employee-run or state-run employment agencies were many. Operating among waitresses, agricultural workers, garment workers, performing artists, janitors, teamsters, longshoremen, and many other groups, they raised wages in the local labor market, offered portable, high-quality benefits that did not penalize workforce intermittence, and provided workers with control over their hours and work schedules without jeopardizing employment security. Increasingly workers desire mobility among employers and flexibility in their work lives. Nonprofit agencies could provide such variety and flexibility, and they could presumably offer higher wages than agencies run for profit.

Employee-run or state-run agencies would need to be subject to strict antidiscriminatory procedures that would guarantee the rights of

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minorities. Groups of workers or so-called neutral agencies can discriminate in hiring just as employers do. It is important to recognize, however, that hiring halls have not been solely the creature of the building trades and other male-dominated occupations. Historically, they served the interests of women and minorities in a wide range of industries, including garment, agricultural, and food service.

Although some employers might rely on such agencies voluntarily, most would seek cheaper labor if it were available. Thus, in order for these mechanisms to flourish, the union must be able to exert control over the labor supply within a local labor market or to pressure employers through recognitional picketing, secondary and customer boycotts, and prehire or preferential hiring agreements.

Lastly, other deeply rooted industrial union traditions must be reconsidered if a postindustrial unionism is to be born. Survey data show that although the majority of workers want collective representation, they are not satisfied with the way most unions respond to their need for promotional opportunities and their desire for recognition of individual achievement. The union movement must reclaim the emphasis among occupational and associational unions on representing the individual as well as the collective interests of employees. In addition to offering training, occupational unions rewarded individual initiative through pay schedules that combined seniority-based scales with wages pegged to skill. The performing arts unions still negotiate a collective contract that sets minimum standards while allowing individuals to bargain supplemental enhancements.

Collective bargaining practices must also be redesigned to enhance employee participation. The efforts of Harvard University and the Harvard Union of Technical and Clerical Workers (HUTCW) are instructive here. As John Hoerr recently reported in the *American Prospect*, their first labor-management agreement was primarily a statement of "value and principles, not an elaboration of rules and procedures." The interpretation of these principles was left in the hands of groups of employees. Rigid, detailed work rules became less important in an environment in which decision-making had been shifted downward and in which trust and good relationships were deemed of value. In addition, Harvard employees relied on large bargaining teams during contract negotiations and set up a system of joint problem-solving councils that have involved hundreds of workers. These new mechanisms for bargaining were effective in large part because the local union vigorously maintained ties with its own members and relied on well-organized and traditional economic pressures when necessary. HUTCW skillfully combined cooperative and adversarial strategies.

Work-force diversity is not new. Over its century and a half of existence, the American labor movement has accommodated that diversity, as the variable practices of organizing and representation among teachers, nurses, construction workers, waitresses, janitors, truck drivers, and others attest. The test of the labor movement in the twenty-first century service society will be whether it can recover and extend that tradition of multiple unionisms. □

On-Line with DISSENT

Upon the advice of several librarians, we have decided to stop printing a biennial index in the pages of *Dissent*. *Dissent* is now indexed in *Academic Abstracts*, the Infotrak Academic Index, *Magazine Article Summaries*, the *PAIS Bulletin*, University Microfilms, Inc. (UMI), the *Social Sciences Index*, and the *Social Science Source*. Readers and librarians who wish to receive a copy of the index for Volumes 39 and 40 of *Dissent* (Winter 1992 through Fall 1993) can write to *Dissent*, 521 Fifth Avenue, N.Y., N.Y. 10017. Please include 52¢ postage.

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Eric T. Freyfogle

OWNING THE WOLF

Green Politics: Property Rights, Ecology Rights

Out on the high plains and mountains of Montana and Idaho, the gray wolf is returning to part of its old homeland. Responsibility for the wolf's comeback ought to rest with the many government land agencies that have spent millions of dollars studying the benefits and options of wolf reentry. But the wolf's return is being handled cheaply and efficiently by the wolves themselves as they drift across the border from Canada, trying their best to steer clear of poisoned bait and speeding pickup trucks. As an endangered species, wolves in the northern Rockies are now protected by federal law.

The wolf's reappearance is drawing no applause from western sheep- and cattle-raisers. For oldtimers who remember when the last wolf carcasses were strung up, the wolf's return represents an annoying reversal in a war they thought they'd won. But America's war against animals is still in the early stages of its second phase—its new, ecological phase. For ranchers and other rural landowners, more animal trouble lies ahead.

Framed broadly, the issue that the wolves present is the familiar one of domination. Is it right for humans to reshape at will the land and its native inhabitants, leveling its hills, replacing its flora, and driving its animals toward oblivion? In the case of the wolf, this domination story contains a special, potent element. The ranchers who object to the wolf's return are not just any people. They're the people who own the land the wolf wants to roam. They're the people who envelope the land with their claims of private ownership, drawing as they do so upon rich veins of thinking on individual rights and the individual's power to resist community desires.

Two thousand miles away, in eastern North Carolina, the wolf is also making a contested comeback, in this case through captive breeding. Here it's not the gray wolf but its close kin, the red wolf. However different the vegetation and terrain, the claims of private ownership ring much the same in the eastern woods. If private ownership means anything, the argument goes, it means the right to exclude, to halt trespasses by animals with two legs or four. It means the right to put land to its highest and best use, so long as that use doesn't interfere with lawful uses of neighboring lands.

Private property has become a rallying cry these days for the anti-environmental movement, and with some effect. The core claim is that onerous land-use restraints amount to a *taking* of private property without the just compensation that the Constitution requires. It's a good slogan—one of the best—and conservative fundraisers know it. So do conservative lawmakers, who in state after state have introduced bills with appealing names like "The Private Property Rights Act," all aimed at undercutting future if not existing land-use controls.

It is easy to brush aside these property-based claims as throwbacks to an era of ecological ignorance. The claims, in fact, do date back to such an era, to a time long before A.G. Tansley coined the term ecosystem in the 1930s, long before John Muir reminded us that when you pull one thing in the universe, you find it attached to everything else. But these claims deserve a direct and fair look, particularly as

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the environmental cause shifts more of its focus from pollution control to land management and ecosystem health.

What should it mean for a person to own land that is an integral part of an ecosystem of which humans are a part? If not full domination, what lesser rights might ownership rightly entail? Property norms in the past have helped individuals relate to the social community. How must they change when we start viewing the landowner also as part of a natural community?

To the radical environmentalist, the wolf has as much right as the rancher to live on the high plains—perhaps even a better right, given that the wolf was first in time. It makes no more sense, in this view, for humans to own wolves than for wolves to own humans. But rhetoric like this does little to advance the search for modes of living that allow humans to thrive while sustaining the health of surrounding natural areas. In some manner humans and animals must co-exist, for the benefit of both sides. For this to happen, human institutions need reshaping in recognition of the functioning biotic communities where people live and get their food. Among the social institutions that will require change, the institution of private ownership stands high on the list.

Today's war over wildlife has as much to do with private property as it does with issues of animal rights or deep ecology. Early clashes in this new conflict involved challenges to hunters who wanted the freedom to kill animals as they saw fit. That issue is raised most potently today by the National Rifle Association. But the main contest has shifted from the roaming hunter to the settled landowner, with his plow, his cattle, and his bulldozer, and the questions have changed as well. Can owners alter their lands in ways that destroy valuable animal habitat, whether for endangered species, threatened species, or even common species that simply need a decent place to live? Can owners bar entry by animals because they fear predation or don't want to share their natural forage? Perhaps most sharply, can owners bar entry by animals that the government has reintroduced? Is the government's liability for loss somehow heightened when damaging animals are deliberately added?

Private Property

In the increasingly loud defense of private ownership rights, no quotation is more revered than Sir William Blackstone's characterization of property as "that sole and despotic dominion which one man claims and exercises over the external things of the world, in total exclusion of the right of any other individual in the universe." Nothing else, he claimed hyperbolically, "so generally strikes the imagination and engages the affections of mankind."

As a statement of law, Blackstone's stark summary was far from true when he wrote it. It has never been true since, either in England or the United States, for the rights of one owner have always been tempered by concerns of neighbors and the surrounding community. Still, Blackstone was right on one point: the idea of property as domination grips the imagination with great tenacity, so much so that alternative images can hardly compete.

Two centuries later, Blackstone's image of lordship still carries great weight. It offers a shield for the wetland owner whose draining and filling saps nature's ability to soften pollution and moderate flooding. The strip-miner, the timber clear-cutter, the abusive overgrazer, and the wilderness disrupter—all these take refuge behind Blackstone's figure of domination.

The idea of property as "despotic dominion" offers an unmistakable baseline from which to determine how far a regulatory measure has cut into the essence of ownership. When we start with the assumption that landowners can do what they please, any regulation, every regulation, becomes suspect. And in the eyes of the "wise-use" movement and other private rights proponents, they are.

Standing close to Blackstone in the property rights pantheon is natural-rights theorist John Locke. Locke gave rise to the labor theory of property, which to his seventeenth-century readers justified private ownership in a way that placed it above the tampering of Stuart

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kings. A person who mixed his or her labor with a thing, Locke announced, became the owner of that thing to the exclusion of the rest of the world. This was a human right that arose from the natural order, which meant it transcended the temporal power of the state.

Locke was smart enough, however, to know that his labor theory justified private ownership only in certain cases. He limited his theory with an important proviso, one that property defenders today are less apt to remember. The labor theory applied, Locke noted, only when a sufficient quantity of the thing at issue existed for other people to have the same opportunity to mix their labor with it and gain ownership. When scarcity developed—as today it always does—the theory no longer applied. Not only didn't the labor theory justify further ownership claims once scarcity developed, scarcity also ended the ownership rights of existing owners of the thing.

When we get down to it, private ownership today is justifiable primarily on the shifting grounds of utility. Like many social constructs, the institution of private property makes sense only to the extent that its consequences are good ones; it is a means to achieve an end, not an independent end that can stand alone. As conditions change and values shift, utility calculations need to be revised, and social institutions based on those calculations need rejustification—not every day, to be sure, but on some regular or ongoing basis.

But if property is a means to an end, a means that we fine-tune as we go along, what is the end? Is it simply individual liberty or self-realization? Or is there, as environmentalists suggest, some transcendent value at stake—not perhaps in the individual wolf, but in the functioning natural order that includes wolves as well as people?

The Wetlands Case

Before the controversy over endangered species became so heated, there was the matter of wetlands preservation. Here the rhetoric of property rights was sharply honed, as the critics of ecosystem planning refined their current tools. The wetlands case required a tough choice, for wetlands sometimes have great value when drained or filled. That value drops, sometimes almost completely, when the owner must leave the land alone. When the Army Corps of Engineers denies a fill permit, hasn't the land been taken by the government, with compensation due the owner?

The way many regulatory critics want to address this "takings" issue is by raising two questions. First, how far has the land value dropped because of the regulation? Second, does the regulation restrain the landowner from a harmful land use, or does it instead obligate the owner to use the land so as to benefit the public? The more the land value drops and the less harmful the activities the landowner has in mind, the more essential it is for the government to pay.

These two factors appear to embrace a good deal of common sense. It's the kind of common sense that conservative critics like to play upon. Just picture the hapless farmer out in South Dakota who's simply trying to make a living. All he seeks is to drain a few prairie potholes and plant a bit of wheat. Left as wetland, the land value is close to nothing. Planted in crops, it's worth hundreds of dollars per acre. What could be more ordinary and harmless than wheat growing; what could be less noxious or nuisance-like?

It takes only modest probing to find the weakness in this reasoning. To gauge how far a land value has declined we need first to know what land uses are considered lawful, yet this is exactly the issue that is the subject of the debate. If we start with Blackstone's language of total domination, any alteration of the land is possible, without regard for its effects on neighbors, both human and nonhuman. Using this baseline, regulations often bring about a considerable decline in land values. To make the decline even steeper, we could start with the hidden assumption underlying many conservative calculations—that the owner of the regulated land parcel is free to do whatever he or she wants while neighboring landowners abide by the contested regulation. This slick, unspoken twist of reasoning raises even further the value of the particular land parcel being examined,

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thereby making even more dramatic the price decline brought on by the regulation.

Like the drop-in-value test, the harm-benefit test is largely useless without prior agreement on the landowner's baseline entitlement. If we assume that a landowner has the right to drain a wetland, then a regulation halting that action requires the landowner to use the land in a way beneficial to the public. If we assume the opposite, that draining is an unnatural, unauthorized land use, then the regulatory measure simply halts a harmful act. So what, then, does the regulation do: ask the landowner to confer a public benefit, or halt a public harm? Not surprisingly, courts applying these tests have reached widely differing conclusions on essentially identical facts.

Even a U.S. Supreme Court staffed by Reagan-Bush appointees has had little trouble discounting these two tests when the harmfulness of a proposed land use is in dispute. In a much-noted 1992 decision, *Lucas v. South Carolina Coastal Council*, Justice Scalia derided these tests as mere politics in disguise. Yet even the Supreme Court's critique hasn't quieted the clamor for a litmus test that readily identifies regulations that cut too deeply into landowner rights. Over the past year, lawmakers in at least ten states have introduced bills to require compensation when state regulation reduces the value of private land by a particular percentage—typically 50 percent—as if the calculation involved merely value-free arithmetic. The model act was drafted by the American Legislative Exchange Council, a probusiness organization of state legislators. A prime supporter is the American Farm Bureau, which as much as any group yearns for the old days when landowners could do as they pleased.

What Rights?

If the environmental protection movement has a theoretical patron on the subject of property rights, it might well be another Englishman, Jeremy Bentham. Bentham was as adamant in viewing private ownership as an artificial legal construct as Locke was in viewing it as a natural right that transcended the state. Property rights, Bentham claimed, arise by operation of the law. Take away the law, and the rights of property disappear. Or more aptly, alter the law and the elements and meanings of ownership change as well. In the environmental age, the entitlements of ownership need to shift considerably if the health of ecosystems is to survive the short-term, self-centered acts of individual owners. Bentham, it would seem, fills the theoretical gap.

A century ago, the American law of property was very much a creation of judicial decisions. The overriding goal of the nineteenth century was to foster economic growth. This wind blew strong, and courts bent with it to make supportive changes to the law, allowing factories to spew smoke and noise and railroads to throw off dangerous sparks, all without incurring liability to neighbors whose more sensitive land uses suffered.

In the twentieth century, courts have stepped back from their law-shaping work, at least in the property area. Legislatures and regulatory bodies now keep property law up to date, in one fashion or another. Concerns over the quality of urban life promoted zoning ordinances early in the century, ordinances that became more specific as "price of progress" arguments lost their force. After mid-century, as the messages of Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, and Barry Commoner penetrated the public conscience, ecological concerns gave rise to new shapes and limits on the entitlements of owning.

Courts could have responded to green-age concerns by expanding definitions of unlawful nuisance to encompass ecosystem-damaging conduct. Alternatively, they could have created or reformulated other common-law doctrines that pushed owners to become responsible land stewards. But so dominant had legislatures become by mid-century, so timid and mechanical had courts become in their reasoning, that old notions of ownership lingered on, carryovers from the age of lightly bridled exploitation. The language of owning retained its nineteenth-century flavor, little affected by the lessons of ecology.

Many of the new, pro-environment regula-

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tory measures were based on far different ideas of land ownership, sometimes cloaked expressly in the language of stewardship. But these new images were merely laid on top of the old ones, and did not displace them. In discussions in and out of courtrooms, the baseline of ownership remained the mythical absolute that prompted Blackstone to wax so effusively. Land-use regulations didn't really redefine what ownership was all about; they imposed restrictions and restraints on what owners could do. Take away the restrictions, and the rights of full use remained.

Although land-use regulation is now common, at least in urban areas, Blackstone and Locke have continued to reign as our chief property theorists in the popular realm. If Bentham had prevailed instead, if we had come to view property as a creation of the state rather than some natural right, notions of ownership could have evolved with each new generation of legislation. Indeed, when we extend Bentham's theory logically, regulation almost by definition can't interfere with property rights, for what the law gives, the law can take away. Benthamite rights last only so long as the people's representatives want them to last. When popular support ends, so do the rights.

In the end, however, environmentalists need to be careful with Bentham, and with the idea that property laws (and other laws) can take whatever form the majority wants. Bentham himself was no friend of wild places, unimproved by the touch of a human owner. "The interior of that immense region," he said of the vast North American wilderness, "offers only a frightful solitude, impenetrable forests or sterile plains, stagnant waters and impure vapours; such is the earth when left to itself."

In fact, Bentham's utilitarian views can support any scheme of ownership—including Blackstone's full dominion—when voters want it that way. Like property law itself, Bentham's ideas provide merely a means, a way to get rid of natural law claims of independence. Once the slate is wiped clean, solid aims of some type must guide the process of reconstruction. Like Bentham, Blackstone, and modern economists, we are likely to see value in a property scheme that protects expectations and rewards economic enterprise. But the protection of expectations need not go so far as to freeze ownership norms. Flexibility must remain, enough to nudge the law of property, step by step, toward the protection of the larger natural whole. Guiding the change must be some image of land health.

Sustainable Growth

A few winters ago, newspapers carried pictures of a lengthy fence, sprawling miles over open fields in the northern plains. The fence was constructed by a private landowner who wanted to save his grass to feed his domesticated livestock. Whether by coincidence or intent, the fence stood in the migration path of a pronghorn herd. Unable to move forward to their wintering grounds, the antelope died of starvation. The public outcry, for a moment, was loud.

When a landowner erects a fence, he proclaims an independence from surrounding people and lands. This kind of independence has certain social and political values to it, but it is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of nature's ways. It rests on the faulty assumption that a particular land parcel has a discrete existence. It assumes, mistakenly, that lines drawn by a surveyor somehow can take precedence over natural interconnectedness.

For years, environmentalists have groped toward an overall goal for their efforts. Laws passed in the 1960s aimed mostly at limiting air and water pollution and saving a few scraps of wilderness. Today, pollution is understood more as a symptom than a discrete problem. It offers evidence of a larger disconnectedness between people and the land, a not-so-subtle clue that human ways and nature's ways are simply too far off alignment. No doubt the preservation of parks and wilderness areas is a useful step. But land preserves simply create islands of health, while the rest of the countryside slides down.

However the environmental goal is phrased, green measures need to aim at the enhancement of functioning, resilient ecosystems. Aldo Leopold offered one possible phrasing back in the 1940s. "A thing is right," Leopold

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concluded, "when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." In Leopold's view, the natural community is the locus of moral value, not the individual animal or plant. Leopold the wildlife manager was prepared to thin the deer herd when it threatened the stability of the ecosystem. The individual deer counted for little in the moral calculus; it was the deer herd that possessed value, or the natural community of which it was a part.

As environmentalists have moved beyond the containment of discrete sources of pollution, they have increasingly seen the need for an overall goal—if not Leopold's land ethic, then something similar to it. Leopold's ethic has triggered criticism because it leaves people out of the picture, or at least the human place in it is ambiguous. When Leopold talks about the biotic community, which human influences are considered natural and which are not? In some manner, the image of a healthy land needs to include people and their aspirations.

Today's most popular phrasing of the land ethic is in terms of sustainability or, to use the more vague, internationally favored term, sustainable development. Some environmentalists prefer a related phrasing, in terms of ecosystem health, a goal that draws its strength from the useful, albeit literally inapt, analogy to the health of an individual organism. All of these phrasings, however, are little more than slogans, attempts to capture in sound-bite form a model of natural functioning that is still well beyond our understanding.

The urgent need today is to get beyond slogans, to develop workable measures or indices of the integrity and functioning of natural areas, including areas where people live. Economists for decades have refined multiple indices to gauge the prosperity of market economies. Similar indices are needed in the environmental area. We need varied ways of assessing the prosperity of a region in terms of its animals, plants, soils, waters, and air. With these indices in hand we can better assess the overall effects of particular forestry and mining practices, farming methods, and suburban sprawl. Perhaps we can then find more effective ways to reverse the declining trends, through ecosystem analysis, bioregional planning, and the like.

Yet as progress is made, a conceptual gap will likely widen. The ecological image of a land parcel—based on interdependence, diversity, and community—will drift further and further from Blackstone's vision of discreteness and independence. And while Blackstone's view may be yielding, its defenders are many and vocal. In the popular press, they include the Farm Bureau, National Rifle Association, and similar groups. On the academic side, they include conservative writers like Richard Epstein of the University of Chicago, whose much-maligned 1985 book, *Takings*, lent credence to a stark, antediluvian vision of landowner dominance and independence.

In midwestern small-town coffeeshops, the right to ruin the land through erosion is an assumed stick in the bundle of ownership entitlements. Farmers demand compensation for nearly every erosion-control step. The right to till from edge to edge is also an assumed right, and payment is expected when acres for wildlife are left untilled. Under recent farm bills, taxpayers have funded ten-year conservation set-asides, often paying for the ten-year hiatus more than the land would fetch in an outright sale. At the end of ten years, the taxpayers can buy the land again.

There are good reasons to guess that the language of owning will soon become more shrill. In the next year or two Congress will return to the Endangered Species Act, again up for reauthorization. If environmentalists have much to say about it, the act will focus less on individual rare species and more on wildlife habitat, including habitat on private lands. Some year soon, states may begin to deal with non-point-source water pollution, which can only be addressed through significant changes in land-use practices on a watershed-by-watershed basis. Some day, too, regulatory bodies may get serious about biologically degraded forests and widespread overgrazing, problems that also will lead to ownership restraints unless landowners suddenly embrace

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the kind of ethical ideals that Aldo Leopold had in mind. Further restrictions may be required if someone ever figures out why populations of amphibians are declining around the world and why the songs of migrating birds grow fainter year by year.

If Jeremy Bentham were right, if property arose simply out of the law, environmentalists could turn to the lawmakers to bring about the changes that are needed. But Bentham was only half correct. Property is indeed a human creation, not some natural institution ordained from above. But it is more an expression of culture than of law. It is not enough for the law alone to change. Blackstone's image needs replacement in the popular culture as well, and that will happen only when an appealing replacement image is offered, one that can grip the imagination as powerfully as Blackstone's has.

The development of a new image of ownership is closely related to the quest for measures of ecosystem health, but it is sufficiently distinct as an agenda item to deserve separate attention. As we reconceive ownership, we need to put our now-discrete tracks of individually owned land back into the ecosystems of which they are, by nature, an inextricable part. In deciding how a land parcel can be used, the natural differences among parcels need to take on far greater importance. When it comes to real estate development, soggy wetland is not the same as a dry field, and ownership norms need to reflect the difference. Trees growing on a steep slope are not the same as trees growing on a flat field, where the corrosive pressures of rain are less potent. Each farm must leave room for wildlife, and net soil loss must end. Ideally, all of this will happen in a way that gives landowners some notice of pending changes and that spreads the burdens evenly among owners of similar lands.

Once the idea of ecosystem health becomes the centerpiece, ownership norms can go on to address other concerns—the social, political, and economic concerns that gave rise to private ownership long ago. Ownership can still carry defined powers to resist the human community, like the right to keep other humans at bay and to ask police to show their warrants. It can continue also to embrace an economic discreteness in the sense that the land's economic produce belongs to the owner. We need not and should not forget the economic benefits that come from protecting reasonable expectations.

But the expectations that gain protection tomorrow will be limited to land-use practices that are ecologically sound. They'll be limited to practices that later generations can sustain without impairment of the land's productivity. When these new ownership norms are fully in place, perhaps they, too, will seem as intuitive and natural as Blackstone's once did. □

M.E. Sharpe

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Andrew Levy

THE BIG NAP

Indianapolis as City of the Future

On the corner of 17th and Broadway, in an African-American section of Indianapolis, there is a vacant space comprising two unused lots, sections of two parking lots, and the edge of a small park. On the evening of April 4, 1968, hours after Martin Luther King, Jr., was killed in Memphis, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., climbed up on the back of a truck parked on a basketball court at this corner and delivered an ex tempore speech that was broadcast on local television and radio. Kennedy was just beginning his campaign in the Indiana presidential primary, running against a local candidate (Roger Branigin, the governor), a state Democratic machine that opposed him, and a newspaper chain (the Pulliam Star-News Newspapers) that openly fought his candidacy.

In Indianapolis, people either know this story by heart or do not know it at all. The corner itself remains uncommemorated. By local accounts, Kennedy disdained the caution of the police chief, traveled to a neighborhood so threatening (at least for that one night) that the police escort refused to follow him, and delivered his remarks; and although there were riots in 110 cities that night, Indianapolis remained calm. Kennedy went on to win the primary, his first victory in that presidential campaign. Two months later he was dead; a quote from the Indianapolis speech is etched on his gravestone at Arlington National Cemetery.

Hearing this story told, however sketchily, one wishes there was a way to avoid it, or leaven it. In Boston the following night, soul star James Brown was discouraged from performing; he performed anyway, the show was broadcast locally, and Boston too remained calm. There is a measure of joy in this anecdote; a larger measure still, to think of the ironic symmetry of Kennedy crouched on the back of a flatbed in the middle of a cornbelt slum, while James Brown played "Give It Up Or Turn It Loose" back in his hometown, both keeping the peace, both political visionaries for a weekend.

In Indianapolis, though, the story of April 4 reads like some uncomfortable memorial to abandonment. First, there is the matter of the speech itself, which does for us the unfortunate service of measuring the precise distance between how we define an act of political courage in 1994, and how we might have defined it. It is impossible to picture Robert Kennedy on that truck (or James Brown onstage) without recalling the failure of political will that followed the Rodney King riots of 1992, when public officials on almost every level of government absented themselves from the streets of Los Angeles. It is impossible to re-read the one-sentence statement in which Robert Kennedy reminds his audience that he knows what it feels like to have a family member murdered (the only time in a public venue when he would discuss his brother's death) without thinking of Senator Albert Gore's invocation of his son's near-death at the 1992 Democratic National Convention, a mini-speech somehow both moving and distasteful. It is impossible to read where Kennedy quotes Aeschylus ("My favorite poet was Aeschylus," he says flatly, pausing between paragraphs) without feeling an intense sense of dislocation: what American politician in 1992

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would have quoted a Greek poet, let alone to an inner-city crowd, let alone ex tempore?

> In our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God.

America is as large or as small as we choose to make it. I moved to Indianapolis in the summer of 1992. There is, I believe, no city as large as Indy anywhere on this continent that has somehow managed to remain this invisible. When I told people that I moved from Philadelphia (not exactly a glamour capital itself) to Indianapolis, they often asked, "Why?" This included people from the East Coast and people from Indianapolis, so the feeling appeared pretty general. Don't move to Indianapolis. Which didn't explain why people were pouring into the place (its population expanded from 700,000 to 1.3 million in the period from 1975 to 1990), or why any one person in the economically languishing America of 1992 would actually ask someone else why he or she had moved suddenly to an unexpected location: I went because there was good work for me there.

People say, in dystopic visions, that the future of America will look like Los Angeles, New York, or Miami. The future will look like the movie *Bladerunner*, or like William Gibson's cyberpunk novel *Neuromancer*: high-technology intermingled with widespread urban and social decay, large semitotalitarian multinational corporations, aggressive and addicting forms of entertainment. Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians will increase in population until they outnumber (and presumably threaten) whites. This will lead to ever larger multinational corporations, panoptic police states, innovative forms of civil unrest.

This vision of the future has been so prevalent in mainstream culture, so difficult to avoid at the movie theater or watching MTV, that one almost worries about the consequences of so much bad faith going public all at once. Philosophers and cultural critics have written on the symptoms of the "postmodern condition": information overload, paralyzing self-consciousness and pessimism, and the embrace of what Jean Baudrillard calls the "hyperreal," mediated experience that seems (or is) more authentic than the original from which it has been generated.

As powerful as these versions of the future (and the present) may be, however, they are not conclusive: they may simply be the most photogenic, the most cathartic, the most reflective of the wary paranoia that has constituted one of America's growth industries of the last decade. It is reasonable, for instance, to predict that Los Angeles or Miami will look like extrapolations of their current selves in forty years (demographic predictions support this: the increase of Hispanics, Asians, and blacks as a percentage of the national population will be concentrated in Sunbelt states, leaving the rest of the country relatively static). Otherwise, it is difficult to make predictions about what the future will look like without reckoning with any one of the cities to which people are actually moving: cities like Orlando, Raleigh, Sacramento, Jacksonville. Similarly, conversation about information overload and the hyper real becomes curiously difficult to sustain after more than one week in a city like Indianapolis, which, as I have mentioned earlier, is not really a small place, only a flat, inconspicuous one.

Here, then, is one vision of America's future. The top three employers in Indianapolis are, in order, the federal government, the state government, and the city government. The fourth largest employer is a drug company. The best restaurants are in strip malls. There are five Gap stores (you can calculate the population of any city by counting the number of Gaps and multiplying by 250,000), and one J. Crew. There are whole neighborhoods of moderately sized, affordable homes, some aging slightly, some brand new developments (called soybean subdivisions, because they usually displace soybean fields) wrapped around underfilled artificial lakes. In these neighborhoods, blacks and whites live side by side. In a northside neighborhood officially called Hooverwood and unofficially called the Gilded Ghetto, you can still see small groups of Orthodox Jews walking to temple across

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well-trimmed lawns at twilight. On the south side, in an old delicatessen called Shapiro's, you can hear elderly gentile men discuss the Ku Klux Klan the way most Americans discuss the Democratic and Republican parties, with phrases like, "What confuses me is their agenda. I know they stand for change but do they still stand for white supremacy, is what I'd like to know." There are churches with grounds that cover acres, and churches in garages with Mass times spray-painted on the door. There are neighborhoods where residents sit on their porches in the evening and listen for the sound of automatic weapons fire in the distance.

Downtown Indianapolis is perhaps ten blocks square. It is so cleansed, and safe, and the streets are so wide (and generally empty), that one almost imagines that it is a faux downtown, a Chamber of Commerce construct, perhaps the "Downtownland" section of Disneyland. At the center of the downtown there is a traffic circle; at the center of the circle stands a Beaux Arts obelisk with catacombs inside and a draped, attentive female silhouette at the top. She salutes the Civil War dead, and the Spanish-American War dead as well, as an afterthought. Surrounding that circle stands a skyline dominated by tall buildings built since 1980, a domed stadium, a sports arena shaped like a giant white cricket, and the spires of churches, grain silos, and new construction.

According to John Hatfield, special assistant for policy development in the mayor's office, city officials are considering a new slogan for Indianapolis: "A Model for the Twenty-First Century City." There is logic in this. While not shedding its reputation as "The Big Nap," a nondescript, backward, corn-fed Heartland capital, Indianapolis now appears to be something of a precursor as well, of what Joel Garreau called "edge cities," the middle-class, mall-laden, placidly multiracial suburban population centers that are altering urban demographics at the close of this century. If the future of American cities is to be found in the suburban housing developments, office parks, and shopping malls that ring increasingly barren inner cities, if the business of Washington, D.C. moves to Alexandria and the middle class of Philadelphia moves to King Of Prussia, then the people of Indianapolis might say, with justification, we've been living like this all along. We have a proper downtown to show to visitors, but only 12,000 people live there. We have bad neighborhoods, but they are not as bad as yours (of the fifty-two largest cities in America, Indianapolis has the fifth lowest crime rate). And everyone has convenient shopping.

It is for this reason that Kennedy's visit to Indiana in 1968 seems particularly relevant to an exploration of what, exactly, the future of American cities might be. While his older brother John has been the subject of all the diverse elements of the mythmaking machine of mass culture, Robert Kennedy has been mythologized more narrowly, as the martyred spirit of tough-minded white liberalism, particularly on issues of class and race. When the myth of the man and the myth of Indianapolis intersect, what seems to emerge is a moment where entitled but enlightened East Coast liberalism and complacent but Christian Midwestern conservatism brought out the best in one another. That what actually emerges is a more complex, more vulnerable kind of myth is no condemnation of Kennedy's political skills or the common sense of his Hoosier audience. It is a testament, rather, to the intransigence of the issues that compelled his speech on April 4 in the first place, and that continue to haunt the efforts of American politicians to build the consensus necessary to make the city of the twenty-first century a coherent place to live.

In many ways, Robert Kennedy's remarks on the night of Martin Luther King's assassination did not make a great speech. "What do you think I should say?" he asks Fred Dutton, his aide, minutes prior to its delivery. Kennedy begins by announcing to his listeners the news that King has been murdered; many in the crowd of a thousand do not hear him properly, however, which leaves him with the disconcerting task of addressing a crowd half of whom are stunned into silence and half of whom are cheering innocently his reverent descriptions of King. Similarly, since the

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details of the murder are still hazy, Kennedy is forced to build his rhetoric around conditional clauses—"considering the evidence there evidently . . . were white people who were responsible"—that disrupt his cadence. He seems struck by the word "difficult," and repeats it, mantra-like, amid pleas for understanding and compassion: "We can do well in this country. We will have difficult times. We've had difficult times in the past. We will have difficult times in the future." He repeats phrases, searching for the right combination of words. He reminds his audience that King was murdered, until he is sure everyone has gotten the message. He stumbles across Aeschylus, and throws the poet's name into the Indiana night on a gamble.

It is, in many ways, not a political speech at all; it is a response to trauma, a sudden synapse failure in the body politic. An open space. One wonders what Kennedy must have thought as he said that sentence, "I had a member of my family killed, but he was killed by a white man." One wonders what his audience thought of that confessional moment submerged in tortured syntax, John Fitzgerald Kennedy's assassination suddenly becoming a footnote (and not, as his brother acknowledges, a particularly illustrative one) in history, not a primal scene. Was it enough? In retrospect, it seems like a verbal turn tested, then abandoned: my sorrow, he seems to be saying, may feel like yours, but maybe not. The language, he seems to say, isn't ready yet.

As soon as I heard about the corner of 17th and Broadway, I wanted to see it. Commemorated sites mark places where history coalesces; unmarked monuments mark the places where history dissolves. But history is made in either place. This vacant space was a brilliant anomaly. It was, after all, still vacant after twenty-five years: if Kennedy's speech had been truly uncommemorated, there might have been some kind of construction there, or the corner at least might have retained the important-sounding name (Broadway Center) that the Indiana media called it in their reports on April 5, 1968. But this persistent vacancy was something more—it was a kind of monument to the dead ends of history, when our alternative selves present themselves in such a way that the loss of them cannot be officially honored, but can be mourned quietly, sullenly.

A persistently vacant space *was* something more. It was a portal. It does not take much time in Indianapolis to appreciate how unusual, even anachronistic, was the circumstance that placed Robert Kennedy, the iconic ruthless liberal of the 1960s, stumping Indiana voters for the crucial primary victory of his presidential campaign. Remarkably, he seemed to have uncovered both sides of Indiana's soul. He met cool Republican audiences, stared down signs that read "You punk," and fought a newspaper publisher who committed his chain to a virtual blackout of Kennedy's events, while running campaign coverage of questionable objectivity and front-page editorial cartoons of startlingly bad taste: one portrayed Indiana as "Mrs. Indiana," favorite-son Governor Branigin as a courtly host, and Kennedy as a debauched dinner guest with his hand planted on the state's left breast. He shouted "From you!" to a group of serenely conservative medical students at Indiana University when they asked him where the money for his social programs would come from, and joked darkly with them afterward that he would lift the medical deferment on the Vietnam draft. He chided a lunchtime audience in Vincennes when they laughed when he told them there were more rats than people in the city of New York: "You can smile," he said, staring into the heart of a state that wore its complacency proudly; "It's true. . . ."

Nevertheless, he won the primary. Searching for a focus for his campaign after Lyndon Johnson's March 31 withdrawal from the presidential race, Kennedy used Indiana to test out new themes, new speeches, new Kennedy-isms. And in a state that was 9 percent black, where the Klan controlled the statehouse well into the 1920s, he chose race and class fairness as his issues. The *Indianapolis Star*, in fact, ran a front-page feature claiming that Kennedy had viciously "inject[ed] racism" into the otherwise pure world of "Hoosier politics." And Kennedy remained relentlessly Ivy League throughout. When a Valparaiso student asked

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him what the government would be doing for starving inner-city children, Kennedy responded, "Why don't we do something about it?" and quoted Camus to unexpectedly thunderous applause. He ended the campaign with a scheduled five-hour motorcade through the northern counties that stretched into ten; exhausted but exhilarated, he spent the evening in the bar in the Indianapolis Airport Holiday Inn, telling a pair of weary reporters how fair the people in Indiana were, and how they had listened to him. "If I lose," he said, finding Indiana's compass, "then, well, I'm just out of tune with the rest of the country."

Like Washington, D.C., Indianapolis was a planned city designed (in 1825) to be a capital, and its location was chosen as a manifestation of a political and philosophical idea, rather than for reasons of geography or transport. Like Washington, D.C., Indianapolis seems to have woven the unspontaneous nature of its origin into its character: it feels like an abstract construct, not like the spontaneous aggregation of individuals that form the haphazard community of other cities. It is situated in the exact geographic center of the state. It is almost perfectly square: like the Navaho rugs whose creators deliberately weaved in a single imperfection so as not to rival God, Indianapolis bears a slight ripple in its perfect squareness near the northeastern corner. The city is split in two on the North-South axis by Meridian Street, which was placed on one of the Earth's meridians. It is split on the East-West axis by Market Street. At the center of the city, which misses by two blocks also being the center of the state, stands the downtown circle.

Let's Go: USA, in its 1992 edition, labels Indianapolis as "All-American to the point of being nondescript." Reading those words, one can almost sense the satisfaction of those early founders who wanted Indianapolis to be the center of something, and who hired an apprentice from the District of Columbia project to make their wish good. It is a description accepted by Robert Kennedy, who chose Indiana as his standard for whether "the country" would sanction him (as West Virginia had sanctioned his brother in 1960 and turned him into a national candidate), and accepted also by NBC News, which in March 1993 chose Indianapolis as its "typical American city" for a series of feature reports exploring the effects of federal economic policies on average Americans. In the encyclopedia of American cities, Indianapolis is the Platonic center (though it has competition from Columbus, Ohio, where fast food companies, enamored of that city's perfectly average demographics, test-market new food lines), a circumstance that has less to do with its actual demographics than with its myth of itself, a myth that exchanges the right to be called an exciting place to live for the right to be called a sensible one.

At the same time, however, to call Indianapolis so All-American as to be nondescript is a strange interpretation of what the city means, and of what it means to be American. If Indianapolis is All-American, it is because it challenges homogeneity as it embraces it: because sameness and difference, left and right, paranoia and trust, are one Mobius strip. Claudia Polley, chair of the Indiana African-American Landmarks Committee, has noted (in phrasing so astute as to be almost poetic) that Indianapolis is "a northern city in a southern state, and a southern city in a northern state." And so, it seems barely dissonant when elderly men talk benignly of the Ku Klux Klan in a Jewish deli that they have frequented since they were children. And while biographers of Robert Kennedy generally give his speech the credit for forestalling violence in Indianapolis in April 1968, it is far more likely that Indianapolis remained calm because, alone among American cities, it possessed a strong and complacent black middle class (a local reporter described them to me as "black Amish") and a thriving Klan: two forces which, for completely different reasons, would tend to inhibit black unrest in the short term.

The oxymoron of Indianapolis is that these two forces should, in theory, also work to inhibit each other in the long term, and that instead they seem to live in a placid and mournful spirit of co-existence that only begins to tell the American story. Although detailing

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the rise or fall of any city is no easy task, local developers attribute the progress of Indianapolis during the last two decades to several interlocking factors. Chief among these factors was the merger of the city with surrounding middle-class Marion County in the mid-1970s, a deft civic gesture that overnight created every big-city mayor's dream, a diversified tax base. With solvency assured, Indianapolis developed under the aegis of progressive Republican mayors such as William Hudnut and Stephen Goldsmith, who pursued policies that mediated their stated goal of transforming Indianapolis into a "world-class" city with the suspicion that most voting Hoosiers bear toward activist government and conscious urbanity. Lacking HUD grants (which were cut during the first Reagan administration) and possessing no consensus for raising taxes, Indianapolis's municipal governments struggled to fund their education and law systems, but constructed public-private partnerships to fund capital improvements, and cultivated such a high degree of cooperation between business and government that the city is now considered a national exemplar of privatization. Defining itself against the cosmopolitan spirit that defines East and West Coast cities (at least in *their* myths of self), Indianapolis's capital improvements were grandiose, but relentlessly sensible, egalitarian, and family-oriented: fresh pavement, a new zoo, professional sports teams, a children's museum scaled to a city three times the size.

As a referendum on the progress of race in America since the 1960s, however, Indianapolis offers drastically divergent evidence. There are the calm, interracial neighborhoods, whose existence can be taken as evidence of Great Society reforms, but whose muted and suburban character also reflects a distinctly Republican social consensus that must be considered Ronald Reagan's (or more likely, Indiana's own) success story as much as Lyndon Johnson's. Within walking distance of these neighborhoods, however, are the neighborhoods where white families drive out black families (and vice versa), and the neighborhoods that seem more despondent than ever: the poverty rate in Indiana rose from 9 percent to 15.7 percent between 1980 and 1992. One can look at these neighborhoods and numbers and find many potential reasons for their existence: the Reagan administration, which slashed most forms of federal aid to cities during the early 1980s; the chaotic but vital Upper Midwest economy of the last decade, which displaced millions of rust industry workers into unemployment or new downsized professions. Noting that the majority of the new poor are children, one can seek explanation among the litany of increases in divorce, illegitimacy, and drug use during this period.

Ultimately, however, Indianapolis is a story about how slowly change comes, not how it sometimes comes too strong. Observing the persistence of organizations like the Ku Klux Klan and the Black Panthers (who clashed twice on the statehouse steps during the winter of 1993–1994), one finds graphic evidence that even government intervention on the scale projected by 1960s liberalism was inadequate to the heavy task of eliminating poverty and racism in a nation as enormous and inchoate as ours. Similarly, while building a strong middle class by annexing the neighboring county served the city well for two decades, Indianapolis's *new* suburbs are flooding with wealthy emigrés from the city, concerned about their taxes and their safety, or perhaps caught in the ideological centrifuge that draws Americans further away from each other in permanent pursuit of a larger yard and a neighborless horizon. In this context, it seems that good municipal government is a matter of building a plausible myth of civic unity. It is Indianapolis's genius of place to mold its diffuse neighborhoods, and the diffuse arguments over their origins, into a frictionless, assimilated whole that almost, but never entirely, allows a resident to forget that the Civil War is still alive here, and that the verdict on how to solve America's race problem remains unsettled.

For these reasons, it is appealing to believe that Robert Kennedy's brief presence here somehow made coherence out of these mixed feelings and divergent evidence—that his victory in the Indiana primary constituted a rare and educational moment of consensus across the political spectrum. As exhilarating as

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aspects of his campaign may have been, however, what appears to have ultimately occurred was a dubious electoral victory that tempers any mythologization of that month in Indiana. Early polling evidence, for example, suggests that Kennedy gained little statistical support for his candidacy while touring Indiana; he merely fought off challenges and solidified his initial level of support. Similarly, quotes from the Kennedy campaign indicate that they sought to gain 50 percent of the vote in Indiana, and to knock Eugene McCarthy from the presidential race. They did neither. It is because Kennedy died that June that his myth froze into its current form: because he was murdered before the Democratic convention, we conveniently forget that he was already losing the nomination to Hubert Humphrey, and that Eugene McCarthy divided the support of American liberals; because he won the Democratic primary in Indiana, we forget that winning the Democratic primary in a largely Republican state does not constitute a real referendum from the Heartland. Because he never ran another campaign, we associate him with issues of class and race, forgetting that after the King riots, those were the issues that constituted a substantial part of virtually every candidate's stump speeches (though Kennedy was considered first on the issue, just as McCarthy was first on the war), including Richard Nixon's.

Rather, Kennedy's Indiana campaign was a haphazard affair. He often told conservative white audiences what they wanted to hear, and altered his speeches for minority audiences. At other times, he seemed clearly bored. He saved his most passionate discourse for question-and-answer sessions, and he was particularly enthralled by contrary but engaged audiences. In unscripted, combative situations, he shone. What emerges from Kennedy's Indiana campaign is a series of authentic moments of confrontation and communion between politician and electorate amid the ennui of a standard, often halfhearted campaign that little altered the presidential race. If Kennedy adopted the Indiana primary as a test of his own synchronicity with the American spirit, he seemed to spend the month testing the extent to which he needed to compromise, and the extent to which the American spirit, as he perceived it, needed to compromise. This is, one supposes, exactly what a young politician in the early stages of his first national campaign must do. And it can be said with certainty that Kennedy lost nothing by standing his ground, which is no small victory. For those of us seeking historical lessons from his visit to Indiana, however, it scarcely constitutes a program.

Robert Kennedy, speaking at a party breakfast in Terre Haute in April 1968:

> They are hidden in our society. No one sees them any more. They're invisible. A small minority in a rich country. Yet I am stunned by the lack of awareness of the rest of us toward them and their problems. We don't see them. We pay all these taxes and pass all these programs to help them, and yet the programs don't reach them and the taxes go for other things, and every year their lives are more helpless than ever and yet we wonder what's wrong with them, after all we did for them.

To get to the corner of 17th and Broadway, use these directions. The streets of Indianapolis follow a straightforward numbered grid system, which suggests a Midwestern ethic of simplicity and openness. In fact, streets terminate suddenly, sidle alongside slender canals and rivers, change directions, or bear the same names as streets in other sections of the city. (This is a Hoosierism. There are identically named towns throughout the state: four Buena Vistas, four Millersburgs, three Mechanicsburgs, two Pumpkin Centers, and so on.)

The section of the city where 17th and Broadway is situated is especially tangled. Driving past restored and decaying Victorian homes (including one that is freshly painted but completely hollowed out by arson), following alongside railroad tracks, maneuvering one-way streets, you will eventually find 16th Street and Broadway, and make a left turn, expecting that 17th Street is directly ahead.

But the road ends suddenly, in a cul-de-sac bordered by a decrepit chain link fence. Despite the fact that the cul-de-sac is oval, cars

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are parked in neat rows on either side. Single-story developments rise on both sides of the cul-de-sac, in the same neat rows. In the middle of the oval stands the burnt chassis of a late model Japanese compact. Its rear wheels are propped up on cinderblocks.

After backing out, make a right turn, then another, then another, onto 17th Street. It is only one-and-a-half car widths across but bears two-way traffic. If a car approaches from the opposite direction, pull over and allow it to pass.

The corner of 17th and Broadway is a T-shaped intersection. It is a quilt of empty spaces. There is a vacant lot on one side, small, littered, and unmaintained; it is bordered by that lurching chain link fence, entangled on this side with a live oak tree. Opposite this lot sits another vacant lot, grassy and freshly mown, but suggesting no civic purpose. On the east side of this space, there is a parking lot for a senior citizens home; on the west side, three full-length, well-kept basketball courts (a basketball court is well kept if there are nets on the hoops), and a children's playground. A sign on that side of the street reads "Martin Luther King, Jr. Park." There is no one in the park.

There is a public building on each side of the corner: the Citizen's Ambulatory Health Center on the east, and Citizen's Multi-Service Center on the west. Both buildings look new, and their parking lots are full.

There are few people around. They move slowly across the landscape, or sit waiting in cars. It is unbelievably quiet.

Perhaps ambiguous and ambivalent political moments deserve ambiguous and ambivalent monuments. In other parts of the country, our greatest public sites of commemoration both mimic and speak for the emotions we bear upon remembrance of the events they honor: the Vietnam War Memorial forces its visitors underground in an unambivalent mourning ritual, but cannot control the strange communion they often experience there; Mount Rushmore challenges its visitors to contrast the grandeur of our most regal presidents carved into the side of a mountain in the middle of the most holy land of the devastated Sioux. If the corner of 17th and Broadway was a premeditated monument, we might say that its designers chose its array of empty spaces, its solitary yet central location, and its lack of a formal marker as a symbolic commemoration of the people and events we can't see, placed in the middle of a city we don't see: a memorial to turning away, an unmemorial.

Still, immediately surrounding that vacancy at the center resides a series of public structures that seem a tribute to Kennedy's vision of an activist government providing support to inner-city communities. The scene suggests a ghostly drama, or the opportunity for a kind of interactive, voyeuristic tourism: stand at the spot where Kennedy stood, and turn in every direction. You will see clean, formidable buildings devoted to health care and education, a senior citizens home, and a well-nurtured park named for the man Kennedy memorialized, a man whose mission was ultimately more essential to the lives of the people that reside in the neighborhood. It is hard to imagine that Kennedy would not be pleased.

At least briefly. It seems churlish to add that, if you lift your eyes further, you find that surrounding that circle of public buildings lies a census tract where the promise activist government extends to blasted neighborhoods has taken, at best, a tentative foothold, and where those impressive public buildings are as anomalous as they seem necessary. One goes to the corner of 17th and Broadway for communion with an uncommemorated moment in American history, and finds instead a communion with the unanswered questions of the civil rights movement and the welfare state in America. Stand at the spot where Kennedy stood, and ask: did activist government try and fail? Was it never attempted with the necessary vigor, or the necessary spirit, or the necessary patience? Or was activist government a success, but inadequate against the entropic forces that have afflicted neighborhoods across the country in the last twenty years? Or was it inadequate to the endemic mistrust that stands between separate races, and separate classes? Stand at the spot where Kennedy stood, in the middle of a city that prides itself on being a model for the twenty-first century, and it will feel like no time has passed since Kennedy

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stood there and tried to find the words that would make the sorrow of one race comprehensible to another. History revolves all around you. The language is still not ready; the twenty-first century, one thinks, is going to feel like starting over.

Epilogue

This essay was begun in late 1993. On May 14, 1994, at 10:30 in the morning, President Bill Clinton, Indiana Governor Evan Bayh, Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith, Senators Edward Kennedy and Richard Lugar, and a list of guests including Dexter Scott King and Martin Luther King, III, Ethel Kennedy, and the prime minister of Ireland, attended a groundbreaking ceremony at the corner of 17th and Broadway for a joint memorial to Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy. The memorial, "The Landmark for Peace," is to be constructed from melted-down weaponry gathered from community gun buyback programs. Although funding and design plans are hazy—it is believed that Clinton's plan to visit Indianapolis for a fund-raising luncheon and a round of golf with the governor rushed and even inspired the announcement of the memorial—sponsors envision a construction completion date within two years.

Approximately 5,000 people passed through a Secret Service checkpoint from 7:30 A.M. to 8:45 A.M., and were placed facing a large stage on which were draped large black-and-white photographs of Kennedy and King against a navy blue backdrop. Gardeners and government personnel had combed the area for days, trimming grass from curbsides and verifying security. A sudden hard rain began to fall at 10:45, which fouled media and Secret Service communications, opened umbrellas, and twisted speeches into improvised forms. But nobody left.

What can be said about this occasion? It took no more than an hour. The crowd, which buzzed and chattered even when the president spoke, stood silently when excerpts from Kennedy's April 4 speech and King's "Mountaintop" speech were broadcast on a large video screen. Richard Lugar, Indiana's current senior senator and the mayor of Indianapolis who declined to provide police protection for Robert Kennedy, tried to consider what the April 4 speech meant locally:

> His [Kennedy's] words were heard around the world, but they were given here first, they were heard by us first, at 17th and Broadway . . . the life of our city, in my judgment, was changed forever by his witness.

His voice cracked imperceptibly as he said "us." Other speeches made repeated references to the late Larry Conrad, the Indiana secretary of state who had first proposed that the site be commemorated; the recent South African elections; the importance of bipartisan political dialogue; and the Indiana Pacers basketball team, who were competing in a playoff game that afternoon, and who had offered to sponsor a national design contest for the memorial. Diane Simon, a local political activist (whose husband owns the team), asked the audience to

> say a prayer for this nation, for the Kennedys, for the Kings, and say a prayer for Bill and Hillary Clinton. And, if you could, maybe say just a little prayer for the Pacers this afternoon.

Edward Kennedy read a poem. Bill Clinton worked the crowd. That evening, videotape showing Clinton, Edward and Ethel Kennedy, and Martin Luther and Dexter Scott King shoveling loose earth and smiling appeared on CNN.

In short, it was great, anarchic, political fun. After the ceremony, an elderly black woman stood beaming in a nearby drugstore. "I just shook the president's hand," she said, holding up her own hand. "It made my day. It absolutely made my day." One week later, there is a shallow hole in the ground at the corner of 17th and Broadway. The grass is still trimmed from the curbsides. The poverty rate in the surrounding census tract stands at 44 percent, doubled from 1970. □

The author wishes to acknowledge the help of the staff of the *Indianapolis Recorder*; Graham Toft, president, Indiana Economic Development Council, Inc.; and Carey Harmon for his essay, "Ideas on Indianapolis."

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Symposium

Stanley Hoffmann

WHAT SHOULD AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY BE?

The collapse of the Soviet bloc and the end of the cold war have changed the face of international politics. What should American foreign policy be in these new circumstances? Dissent *asked Harvard's Stanley Hoffmann to outline an answer to this question, and solicited responses from an array of thoughtful commentators on American and world affairs, which we present below.*—EDS.

For forty years, containment provided a rationale, if not always a reliable compass, for American diplomacy. When Gorbachev and his associates decided to replace rivalry with partnership and confrontation with accommodation, American statesmen briefly envisaged a "new world order" remarkably similar to Franklin D. Roosevelt's great design of 1944–45—one in which a concert of great powers led by the United States would provide collective security against (other) aggressors. The Gulf War marked both the culmination and the beginning of the end of that brief era: when the Soviet Union disintegrated and Yugoslavia collapsed into civil war, an entirely new age began.

The Clinton administration cannot be blamed for having failed to produce a new grand doctrine or design. In the first place, a world without a single focus of conflict—what Arnold Wolfers called a "relationship of major tension"—does not lend itself easily to a sweeping vision, or even a simple slogan. In the second place, this is an administration that wants to give priority to America's economic renaissance and to the solution of some of the country's major social issues—long neglected, in part, because of the priority of the global cold war. It is therefore not surprising that Clinton's diplomatic and security team is low-key rather than forceful, and that American foreign policy in the first year and a half of the administration can be summarized as follows: an aggressive foreign economic policy aimed at opening markets for American goods—as a vital part of general economic policy; an increasingly troubled reliance on Yeltsin and reform in Russia, aimed at salvaging the dream of Russian-American cooperation around "Western" principles; and "pragmatic" improvisations to cope with some of the many troubles of the planet.

It is not surprising, but it is not sufficient. There have been enough fluctuations, tactical reversals, and conflicts of goals to suggest that the time has come to think about priorities and strategies. Henry Kissinger is right when he writes, at the end of his new book, *Diplomacy*, that America can neither "remedy every wrong and stabilize every dislocation" nor "withdraw into itself." In the absence of a major threat to American security and values, the public is in no mood to do the former. But America's vast power has created a network of interests that rules out isolationism, and like every great power the United States also has an overriding

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interest in an international milieu or society compatible with, or not inimical to, essential American values, which are those of liberalism. What has to be defined is a policy of involvement without overexpansion.

Let us begin with the problems we face. The first is the problem of Russia. It is comparable to that of France after Napoleon's fall, of Germany after 1918. The cold war, for many reasons, did not degenerate into global violence, but it was a worldwide conflict, and it ended with the defeat of one side. As in 1815 and 1918, the defeated party is in domestic turmoil. There is little the outside world can do to bring democracy and a free enterprise system to Russia—any more than it could assure the success of Weimar. But domestic trouble is not the only issue; the other issue, which the winners must think about, is the reintegration of the loser into the international system. Anything that makes this reintegration more difficult, and appears to make it humiliating, risks being disastrous both for world order and for the future of a shaky new regime. The statesmen of the Congress of Vienna understood this concerning France; those of Versailles saddled Weimar with burdens that the new regime's foes exploited against democracy as well as against the equally fragile peace in Europe and against the new order of the League of Nations. It is important, and not only because of Zhirinovsky, that we remember Weimar when we deal with what is still—but for how much longer?—Yeltsin's Russia.

The second problem is that of a bewildering number of conflicts, potential and actual. Some are classical situations of interstate rivalries and colliding ambitions—between the two Koreas, between India and Pakistan, Iran and Iraq, and so on. Others are domestic tragedies: the disintegration of weak, artificial or multinational states through ethnic, religious, or political conflicts; or else massive violations of human rights, either as the result of such conflicts or by a regime determined to preserve its tyrannical power or to prevent ethnic or religious secessions. Two features of such issues are essential. First, dealing with them—preventively or after they have become crises—requires interventions in domestic affairs and moves against internal policies (for instance, a nation's policy of weapons production and acquisition). Second, partly because of this, and partly because of the number of such issues, their solution requires the cooperation of a concert of outside powers—through international or regional institutions, or through diplomatic coalitions, wielding a mix of sanctions and rewards.

This brings us to a third problem. What is needed to cope with these issues is a kind of world steering committee, composed of major global and regional powers who would try to agree, at least informally, on criteria justifying external interventions, and who would distinguish cases that have to be addressed because the failure to cope with them would seriously endanger international or regional security or fundamental values from cases that pose no such threat or offer no prospect of successful intervention. One of the troubling features of the present moment is the absence of any such "concert," partly (but not exclusively) because most of the obvious candidates are absorbed by domestic difficulties.

Clearly, the three problems are linked. What should American policy do about them? Our goal ought to be the creation of a concert of powers capable of dealing with those issues or crises whose neglect could have disastrous effects or set an intolerable precedent. Without such a concert, the UN—which is no more than the sum of its members, plus a bureaucracy of dubious efficiency—will not be able to play the role it ought to be playing. It is illogical for American diplomacy to be both against unilateral American interventions and against an enlarged role for the UN. If we do not want to "remedy every wrong," we must give the UN the means to deal with significant "dislocations"—and the most important means are the political, financial, and military support a concert of engaged powers could provide.

Reaching such a goal requires, in the first place, a policy aimed at the guided reintegration of Russia into world affairs. Russia has

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always—before, during, and after communism—been obsessed with being treated as a major power and recognized as an equal by the other great actors on the world stage. To take Russia for granted and to ignore its traditional interests and connections only feeds anti-Western nationalism there. But in exchange for taking these into account, we need to obtain from Russia's leaders an assurance that legitimate interests (for instance in the stability of Central Asia or the fair treatment of Russians in Ukraine or in the Baltic states) do not become pretexts for a new imperialism, and that traditional connections (for instance with the Serbs) do not become a reason for protecting perpetrators of ethnic cleansing and of crimes against innocent civilians.

The United States also needs to obtain the cooperation of China, whose present leadership is near the end of its rule. To press large (if legitimate) demands about human rights publicly and self-righteously helps neither the cause of human rights nor that of a new and necessary concert; to appear too eager for trade with China (at a time when China is the main beneficiary of it) is the opposite mistake. Further expansion of trade ought to be made conditional, both on progress over human rights and on Chinese cooperation over issues of nuclear nonproliferation and the trade of weapons of mass destruction. Similarly, a policy toward Japan that seems to focus only, and brutally, on the opening of Japanese markets and the reduction of our trade deficit with Tokyo risks having the opposite effect from the one we ought to seek: a greater involvement in international peace-keeping operations and in antiproliferation diplomacy.

Two of the objectives that a "concert policy," inside and outside the UN, should pursue, are, first, the resolution of those disputes whose festering feeds the onslaught of Islamic fundamentalism not only against "the West" but against secular Muslim forces and regimes—I am thinking of the Palestinian issue, and of the territorial and nuclear conflicts between Pakistan and India; second, the adoption, for the many cases of state disintegration that are likely to occur, of a policy that would both condemn and punish ethnic cleansing and seek, for threatened minorities, solutions that would fall short of full secession.

As for human rights, when massive violations result from ethnic and religious conflicts, as in Bosnia, or from civil wars, as in Angola, Rwanda, and many parts of the former Soviet Union, efforts by an international or by a regional concert of powers to resolve those conflicts are the best way of putting an end to massacre. When the violations are perpetrated by a regime for which the United States has acquired, through history, a distinct responsibility—as in Haiti, and also in Iraq (should Saddam Hussein try again to destroy the Kurds in the North and the Shiites in the South)—Washington has a duty to protect the victims (and certainly not to aggravate their misery through sanctions that hit them far more than they hit the murderers)—a duty that it cannot evade without undermining its human rights efforts everywhere and justifying the cynicism of those, in Asia and elsewhere, who choose to present the battle for human rights as a Western exercise in neo-imperialism.

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Responses

Alice H. Amsden

Politically it may be correct for American foreign policy to be "involved" without being "overexpanded," as Stanley Hoffmann advises and as Clinton's waffling already makes a foregone conclusion. Our foreign *economic* policy, by contrast, has been aggressive, not just in prying open overseas markets, as Hoffmann mentions, but also in posing the market mechanism as the solution to foreign governments' every woe. Unemployment is one of the most serious problems of the world economy, and can no more be relieved by free-market nostrums today than it could be in the 1930s. If unemployment in the United States were still measured the way it was measured during the Great Depression, it would be around 15 percent.

Today's global joblessness originates in the electronics revolution and the rapid diffusion of labor-saving technologies across national borders. The Reagan-Bush neoliberal policy mix that Clinton finds so comfortable a hand-me-down makes matters worse by being contractionary. To reduce unemployment we need innovative solutions. Stanley Hoffmann, however, seeks asylum in "essential American values, which are those of liberalism."

American export of free-market ideology has suited the Democrats and Republicans alike because deregulation supposedly gives American multinationals a cut of the action from foreign banks and service industries. Liberalization, or pressuring foreign governments to balance their budgets, is designed to help Washington's war against inflation. Fiscal conservatism is achieved by privatizing state-owned enterprises and cutting expenditures, which reduce aggregate demand. Monetarism pervades the Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank and International Monetary Fund), where fighting inflation through tight money takes precedence over increasing investment and jobs, or mitigating inflationary pressures (if any) through incomes policies and other arrangements to raise both wages and productivity. Real wages have been stagnating in the United States and collapsed in developing countries in the 1980s in step with currency devaluations and other market-driven policies to "get the prices right."

Hoffmann is understandably worried about the destabilization of Russia, but the entire East European region's instability is partly related to the disastrous consequences of shock therapy, the neoliberal Epiphany. The abrupt freeing of all administered prices led to a surge in inflation, a collapse in living standards and aggregate demand, and the bankruptcy of state-owned enterprises. If Eastern Europe is to recover, it needs policies that harness market forces but that junk the mythologized Anglo-American model (for example, a Mongolian stock market!) which Clinton has clung to as an article of faith.

On another tack, Hoffmann argues that "further expansion of trade ought to be made conditional on progress over human rights," and he faults the "cynicism" of foreign leaders who "present the battle for human rights as a Western exercise in neo-imperialism." Foreign politicians may be cynical, but they're in good company. Much pontificating in the United States about human rights is self-serving.

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Thailand, for instance, easily killed as many people struggling against a military takeover as China killed in Tiananmen Square. But Thailand, which jives with U.S. geopolitics (whatever they are), received barely a rebuke from the United States, whereas China, with its huge trade surplus and neocommunism (its economic reforms are succeeding without shock therapy), was morally reprimanded until corporate America bawled that hampering trade was hurting its profitability.

Stanley Hoffmann offers no counsel on the economics of foreign policy, but the economic liberalism of the past twenty years warrants fundamental reform. Sensible foreign policy needs to make analytical and legal distinctions among human, political, and economic rights (while making intense efforts to regulate the arms trade). Not holding fair elections, or keeping markets closed and not allowing trade unions to organize, is different from torturing people. If the United States institutes embargoes against any country that tortures (and, as Stanley Hoffmann recommends, supports strengthened United Nations troops in flagrant cases such as Bosnia, Rwanda, and Haiti), an international minimum standard of human rights may evolve.

One suspects that some of the same self-serving motives that characterize American calls to tie trade to human rights also characterize the rising momentum to tie trade to improving developing countries' wages and environments. Both are noble objectives, but would stop or seriously slow the smaller countries' growth in output, employment, imports, and ultimately long term wage rates.

The best strategy to raise wages in poor countries is to coordinate global expansionary policies. When international trade and employment increase, wages rise and tensions between workers in rich and poor countries abate. Coordination of global growth is necessary (just as Hoffmann finds political coordination necessary) because no one country can expand alone given high international capital mobility; for instance, a country that unilaterally lowers interest rates to stimulate investment risks capital flight as speculators go elsewhere for higher returns. We need a change in governance in the Bretton Woods institutions, which were designed by John Maynard Keynes to fatten the global economy but that are emaciating it with Hooverite doctrines from the U.S. Treasury.

Paul Berman

I have no particular quarrel with Stanley Hoffmann's comments, not even with the one endorsing a "free enterprise system" in Russia. But since *Dissent* is a journal of the left, allow me to exhume an additional point from the ancient casket of Marxist theory.

The core of modern left-wing thinking about foreign policy has always been (or imagined itself to be) moral. If you accept—as many people used to do—Marx's labor theory of value, you must also accept a corollary added by Lenin in 1916. To wit: the wealth of the wealthy nations derives from the super-exploitation of colonized labor (thus forestalling the business disaster that would otherwise result from the falling rate of profit, as per Marx's theory). Accordingly American wealth must be morally even more suspect than it might otherwise seem, and American actions abroad must be driven by imperialist motives—no matter what the government and its defenders might say. America's best contribution to world affairs would therefore be to refrain from foreign interventions (except maybe against the devil himself, that is, Hitler, the grand exception), in the hope that smaller nations with higher ideals might profit from the American absence.

Marx's labor theory of value is, however, wrong—as almost everybody on the left now agrees—which means that Lenin on imperialism must likewise be wrong. American foreign policy in the past sometimes *was* imperialist, especially in Latin America; and during the cold war sometimes it looked imperialist, that

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is, it *was* sinister, though motives other than imperialism were at work. Yet America's wealth derives, by and large, from its own productivity (or self-exploitation), not from colonialist rapacity. In which case the American left has reason to rethink its moral analysis.

We must ask ourselves: what purpose is there in having so much wealth and capability if we do not deploy these things on behalf of people who have plummeted into the ninth circle of absolute desperation? On the day that I write this comment—it was months ago, due to *Dissent*'s long lead time (a product of left-wing poverty)—the news is full of details about Hutu Nazism against the Tutsis and other people in Rwanda. It is news to drive a person mad. For here is hell before our eyes, and though the world's greatest collection of planes and tanks and mobile hospitals sits in our military bases, we are doing precious little in response. That is disgusting.

Every cautionary point raised by Stanley Hoffmann is sound. *Of course* we cannot intervene everywhere and solve every problem (and we hardly need to invoke Henry Kissinger to make such a homiletic point). "Look before you leap" should be inscribed on the dollar bill. But let us not describe any failure of ours to intervene—militarily, or semi-militarily, or in some other forceful way—as morally praiseworthy. Let us not confuse the greedy hoarding of our own national privilege with an expression of anti-interventionist, left-wing principles (as some people might be tempted to do) or of sagacious foreign policy theory (as might be the temptation of others). Let us not invoke a lack of historical ties to such-and-such a region to explain our inaction (even if, in the case of Rwanda, the bloody-handed French do have a moral obligation to undo their own atrocious policies). If we are going to stand aside and gawk while the world's unluckier countries dissolve into mass death, let us at least despise our inactivity, and let us question ourselves, the way a fireman questions himself when he holds back from rushing into a burning apartment house.

By the way, something more than national wealth ought to give us a moral basis for contemplating interventions on behalf of the oppressed in other countries. Henry Adams, in his history of the Jefferson administration, ascribed to the ordinary Americans of 1800 a revolutionary belief, according to which America's duty was to support "the overthrow of tyranny, aristocracy, hereditary privilege, and priesthood [read: "fundamentalism"], wherever they exist." For a long time and for serious reasons, that belief came into discredit. But an instinct for international solidarity is inherent in the idea of democracy, and sooner or later the internationalist sentiment bobs back to the surface, sometimes under different names—currently, for instance, under the harmless-sounding labels of "human rights" and "humanitarian aid." That same revolutionary instinct ought now to become the principle of those who wish to continue viewing foreign policy through a lens of moral considerations. Yes, emphasizing our responsibility to show solidarity would mean, for many of us, a political turnabout. We who used to be the party of anti-intervention (because we were anti-imperialists) should now become, in the case of various dictators and genocidal situations, the party of intervention (because we are democrats). We should say: America must avoid foolish actions, and the Marines are not necessarily our international agency of choice. (We do remember that much from our anti-interventionist days.) But democratic countries should act. Especially rich ones.

Mitchell Cohen

A far-reaching transformation of global politics has made the world a freer but messier place. The cold war was never tidy, yet superpower competition did impose a simplicity—often an unfortunate simplicity—on perceptions of events, if not on the events themselves. Today, virtually all the assumptions that governed international politics must be reconsidered.

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George Bush proclaimed a "new world order," but this only masked a new world flux that he was unwilling to address in a comprehensive manner. Fashioning the Gulf coalition as an exercise in American-led collective security was, finally, a moment, not a policy. Missing was a reconceptualization of America's place in a changing world, of a proper balance between domestic needs and foreign requirements. But Bush did have a strategic perspective in one essential domain, and that was foreign economic policy. Here the guide was a type of market fundamentalism, with little regard for the social or environmental costs, expressed in the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) negotiations and in prescriptions for ex-communist lands.

I don't see that Clinton has gone much beyond this, except for some ecological addenda to NAFTA. In fact, in the first year and a half of his administration, NAFTA was just about the only foreign issue that truly moved the White House. When is it appropriate and when is it inappropriate for the sole remaining superpower to intervene abroad? On this vital issue the Clinton team has not provided Americans with much more direction than Bush's. Since calls for us to police (or help to police) the world are now chronic, and since the history of American interventionism is not glorious (with some important exceptions), this is a serious failure.

Americans entered the post–cold war era with a sense of deep domestic malaise, due especially to the socioeconomic consequences of the Reagan-Bush years. Consider this depressing statistic, reported in Paul Kennedy's *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century*: in 1988, 65 percent of federal research dollars went to the military, while .5 percent went to environmental problems and .2 percent to industrial development. It is not surprising that Americans are torn between engaging the new world and turning inward. Undoubtedly, we need to be circumspect in our foreign engagements, even while recognizing that it is impossible as well as dangerous and morally dubious to isolate or insulate ourselves from the world. This is precisely why Washington needs, if not a grand design, then a much broader vision; the very absence of a single focus of world conflict demands it. In a way, Stanley Hoffmann's thoughtful proposal for a concert of powers reveals that his description of the Clinton administration is too generous.

International steering through these messy times is a good idea, and something like an enhanced UN Security Council is what Hoffmann has in mind. It seems to me that a useful supplement may be taken from an alternative security strategy proposed recently by Charles William Maynes in *Foreign Policy*. Maynes wants to foster regional "self-reliance" through structures such as ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), the OAS (Organization of American States), and the OAU (Organization of American Unity). This notion has some real problems: regional organizations may prove ineffective (witness the Europeans and Yugoslavia) and regional actors may pursue their own narrow interests selfishly in the context of efforts to solve a local crisis. Still, a balance between Hoffmann's concert and Maynes's regionalism would be salutary, especially since there is a dual dynamic at work in the new world flux: globalization plus fragmentation.

Finally, it is essential to bear in mind that the stakes today are not solely national security and amicable interstate relations. The ideological proclivities—market fundamentalism—of powerful nonstate international economic actors such as the IMF (International Monetary Fund), the World Bank, and multinationals affect dramatically the lives of millions of people. These institutions, busy championing what Alice Amsden has called "economic correctness," are subject to no democratic controls or accountability. Their might has been enhanced by revolutions in communications and technology; concurrently, the ability of governments, democratic or otherwise, to harness economic forces to set social priorities has eroded. While economic correctness is presented as the "natural" order of things, social charters are emasculated, unions battered, and international ecological and popula-

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tion problems deepen. A concert of powers, both global and regional—fine; but no less urgent is the need for a Socioeconomic and Environmental Concert to counter the orchestration of the IMF and company.

Bogdan Denitch

This White House seems to have no foreign policy vision and no interest in developing one. This is a bad political mistake—even for an administration that would prefer to focus "like a laser beam" on domestic problems. It is the charisma established on international questions that gives the American presidency its imperial aura, which can sometimes be successfully parlayed in domestic politics. The bad polls on Clinton's foreign policy performance will greatly weaken his ability to mobilize support for his social programs.

But the greatest sin of this administration is its inability to grasp the historical opening that the end of the cold war has provided for democracy abroad. The United States unflinchingly spends billions for the military and cries poor when it comes to large-scale economic aid for the post-communist countries in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. It has permitted the North-South gap to keep widening remorselessly. The great opening for democracy in South Africa will not survive if the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank attempt to impose austerity in the face of rising expectations for greater social justice and equality.

This is playing with fire! Economic misery will breed full-blooded populist ethnic nationalism and other authoritarian movements rather than democracy and pluralism. President Clinton does not even propose that we provide a fraction of what we spent on defense for a chance at real security in the post–cold war world. Here a lack of courage and vision can have catastrophic consequences.

Sustained long-range help must be provided for the economies and societies of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. There must be a massive effort to raise the living standards of the South and to give South Africa a genuine chance. This should obviously be a multinational effort mobilizing the European Community and Japan as well. This is also in the most direct self-interest of the United States and the world economy. The Marshall Plan helped rebuild Europe after the Second World War, but it was also very good for the United States. An analogous massive reflationary economic effort is needed on a world scale. This is the only way to do something about the growing North-South gap, provide economic stimulus for the North and give the post-communist regimes a chance. Otherwise we will be haunted by the ghosts of Weimar, to the peril of democracy, stability, and world peace.

There is also the question of security. Should the United States act as a world policeman in those areas where the breakdown of government jeopardizes the lives of large numbers of people, or where major threats to regional or world peace arise? If not (and I believe that the United States should act only within multilateral arrangements, which take time to negotiate and are therefore too slow for most emergencies) should we instead support the creation of a standing world police force under the United Nations?

I assume no one proposes that there be no police force capable of overriding local sovereignty. Think of the slaughter, rapine, and disorder in Rwanda, Southern Sudan, Kurdistan, Bosnia, Haiti, Myanmar, Armenia, and Georgia, and very likely soon Cambodia. In all these cases, the legal government is either incapable of stopping the slaughter or is the active perpetrator.

Retired Admiral Gene LaRoque, Congressman Ron Dellums, and Gordon Adams, the former director of the Defense Budget Project, have systematically critiqued not merely military waste but the very assumptions that

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underlie our military budgets. The question is not the size of the budget, but rather what is sufficient for a reasonable security policy. From that point of view, a whole range of enormously expensive weapons systems become clearly redundant. For starters, think of nuclear submarines, heavy battle tanks, Stealth bombers and fighters, and a good half of the aircraft carrier battle groups.

If it is our fate to be a mainstay of UN-sponsored police actions, which is not in itself a bad thing, then what we should end up keeping are the Marines, light infantry divisions, flexible air strength, and some naval transport and support units. That all makes for a very much smaller budget than anything imagined by Clinton's speech writers. We do not need to be that unimaginative.

Richard Falk

Characteristically, Stanley Hoffmann assesses the challenges facing American foreign policy with the touch of a master: broad brush strokes set on an enormous canvas, with impressive attention to nuance. The stance adopted is neither critical nor apologetic, but rather magisterial: the detached scholar sensitive to complexity and human frailty, approaching the torments of the world with compassion, but also with a measure of irony, given the way states behave, especially the sole surviving superpower, and thus not expecting much to be forthcoming by way of innovation or commitment. I find myself in general agreement with Hoffmann on specifics, but disappointed by his accommodating tone and by the absence of a more radical line of critique that might contribute to the building of a post-Marxist, post-cold war consensus on foreign policy among progressives in the United States.

On tone, I find the reliance on Kissinger's banal insistence that the United States must find a balance between excessive involvement in the troubles of the world and withdrawal quite puzzling, and on reflection disturbing. Why make such a gesture of deference to the realist wizardry that Kissinger exemplifies? The Kissinger quote also appears to operate as a signaling device in Hoffmann's essay, conveying acceptance of the world as constituted, with criticism limited to matters of tactics and process. As such, it is not surprising that the only reform mentioned by Hoffmann is a call for "a world steering committee" (the Concert of Europe globalized) of leading states and regional powers to handle the daunting agenda of humanitarian crises, failed states—in effect, to address the whole domain of implosive geopolitics that has come to dominate the international political scene since the end of the Gulf War.

I have two sets of difficulty with this aspect of Hoffmann's approach. A world steering committee already exists. Hoffmann seems to overlook the annual economic summits of the G-7 (Group of Seven)—which is now the G-8, with the addition of Russia—bringing together the heads of state of the leading market economies. Even in the latter stages of the cold war, no other event commanded such consistent attention on the part of political leaders in the West. These summits are preoccupied with core strategic interests, namely, the management of the world economy for the sake of maximizing growth, trade, and efficiency, and guarding against radical challenges to security, resources, and markets of the sort posed by pariah states (Iraq, Iran, Libya, North Korea). The point here is that without the East/West encounter as a global setting the tragedies associated with Somalia, Bosnia, and Rwanda do not engage the strategic interests of the United States, and others.

Hoffmann treats Clinton's strong stands on foreign economic policy as extensions of his commitment to be a domestic president. Surely this is correct, yet insufficient: Clinton's do-or-die support of NAFTA and GATT while he waffles on everything else (from human rights in China to UN peacekeeping), is also part of his implicit pact with Wall Street, and thus with the priorities of global capital. And it

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is a pact made more distasteful in Clinton's case since it so perfectly reproduces the Reagan-Bush approach to these issues, including the refusal to heed the objections of organized labor and liberal church and environmental constituencies. If the party affiliation of a president makes no difference on foreign economic policy, then the whole relationship of democracy to the centrality of parties, elections, and accountable politicians is undermined, especially with respect to disadvantaged segments of society.

I believe that Hoffmann accepts too readily the mainstream line of discussion on American foreign policy. First of all, opportunities for bolder action in a world released from significant conflict among leading states are not even mentioned. Instead of Hoffmann's Beltway stress on antiproliferation policy it would seem opportune to insist that our government explore prospects for the renunciation of nuclear weaponry. After all, if Mikhail Gorbachev could seriously propose (and Reagan briefly endorse) a nuclear-free world for the next millennium, why not Bill Clinton? Similarly with the United Nations. The unwillingness of countries to put many of their citizens at risk for humanitarian goals, or to finance the UN in a suitable manner, surely supports recent calls for establishing a UN peace force composed of volunteers and especially trained for "peace-waging" missions. Shouldn't we also hold Clinton to account for his failures to follow through on his promise of a foreign policy based on "assertive multilaterialism"? True, intervention under UN auspices may often not work, or require too large a commitment, but for precisely this reason a more autonomous United Nations seems like a preferable alternative to the current US approach: a combination of revived unilateralism (vis-à-vis North Korea) and anti-internationalism (Rwanda). And, further, what about the democratizing of the United Nations itself, creating a second assembly by way of direct election (similar to the European Parliament), adding a moral superpower to the Security Council (by reference to internal criteria of well-being and external contributions to peacekeeping and human rights), and giving appropriate NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations) networks standing to participate in Security Council and General Assembly debates? Why not tap into the foreign policy potential of transnational democracy?

And finally, on the issue of genocide, whether in Bosnia, Rwanda, or anywhere, can't we expect more from American leadership? Surely most of the blame for the record of meager response deserves to be widely shared. Leading governments in the region and public opinion have been apathetic, aside from brief surges of concern often stimulated by television. But the United States as the anointed leader of "the new world order" does have a special opportunity, and hence a heavy responsibility, to mobilize a high-profile response. Why can't we expect Clinton to do for people what Bush did so skillfully for the sake of oil? Perhaps the deepest criticism of Clinton's foreign policy is its embrace of a geo-Disney outlook that promotes a complacent consumerism as a substitute for human solidarity.

To the extent such criticisms are dismissed as utopian, citizens holding progressive commitments have been disenfranchised. It is the exclusion of such concerns from Hoffmann's depiction of the foreign policy scene that I find particularly distressing, implying that the degree of freedom available to the critical political imagination is no greater than media moguls like Rupert Murdoch would have us believe. We can do better!

Susan George

Stanley Hoffmann's title "What Should U.S. Foreign Policy Be?" confines him to writing a prescriptive piece and far be it from me to fault an author for not doing what he didn't set out to

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do. Still, I found myself wishing he had taken more than six lines to examine what American foreign policy actually is, as a rough guide to both the present and the future.

Hoffmann sums up the status quo as (1) an economic policy geared to blasting open markets, (2) a dodgy reliance on Yeltsin and (3) ad-hoc improvisations in the rest of the world. Fair enough, but offhand, I'd say there's a good deal more to it than that and ask Stanley Hoffmann to go the extra mile and recognize that U.S. policy is also being made by default.

During the scandalous NAFTA vote-garnering scramble, it became clear that Bill Clinton's policy differs from Reagan's and Bush's imperceptibly if at all; that if you can't sell consensus to the American people, you can, if necessary, buy it. In the name of "free" (deregulated) trade, NAFTA and GATT (or the future World Trade Organization) will transfer significant powers to non-transparent, non-accountable bodies whose decisions can (in fact already do) supersede domestic law.

For over a year, Clinton didn't bother to appoint a new U.S. executive director for the World Bank but hastened to name Larry Summers Under-Secretary of the Treasury, thus making him the man who gives that executive director (now Jan Piercy) her instructions. Summers is not just the former chief economist at the bank who told a select list of colleagues that the logic of "dumping a load of toxic waste" in low-wage countries is "impeccable." He has also praised the "obvious entrepreneurial energy of the black market" in Russia and has been described by the *Los Angeles Times* as a "virtual tent-preacher touting free-market economics to developing countries."

The bank, with its sister, the IMF (International Monetary Fund), is now making policy—by U.S. design or default—in some ninety countries in the South or the former Eastern bloc. That policy, a species of market fundamentalism, is called "structural adjustment," and it causes enormous human suffering and ecological devastation. One Bank official said in public that the success of this policy in Eastern Europe should be judged by the degree to which unemployment rises (he mentioned 20 percent jobless as a target). In Russia, where Hoffmann rightly sees stability as crucial, the bank is fast and furiously privatizing with one hand while dismantling social services with the other. The market is somehow, like the Lord, expected to provide.

Either Clinton thinks all this is OK, or he and his people aren't even aware of it—one hesitates to suggest which is worse. The leader of the G-7 and host to the Bretton Woods Institutions can, if he so chooses, make policy there—certainly Reagan and Bush didn't hesitate to do so. As one World Bank director said, "The U.S. could name Mickey Mouse to the Board and he would still have enormous power." Surely these voluntary transfers of American national sovereignty and policy-making functions to nondemocratic, supranational bodies should be noted as a "foreign" policy of sorts.

Clinton has so far chosen to follow, meek and mild, the lead of his Republican predecessors. In the year 2000, what we used to call the third world will contain about five-sixths of humanity, much of it the victim of two decades of structural adjustment, young, uneducated, and angry. As far as I can tell, the United States hasn't a clue as to what a desirable relationship with this fairly sizable chunk of the planet's population ought to be. There are also going to be increasing conflicts over dwindling ecological resources, including water, forests, and bio-diversity, with possibly major, irreversible environmental "flips" (climate, pollution, nuclear, whatever).

Isn't Hoffmann's (or Wolfers's) new "relationship of major tension" staring us in the face? Is ad-hockery going to see us through as the flashpoints multiply? It wouldn't take much, not even much money, to establish a more intelligent—not to say more humane—policy toward the increasingly restive poor and toward the planet, but it would mean reining in the supranational institutions that are behaving now like global ministries of trade, finance, and everything else.

I don't agree with Hoffmann that a "world steering committee" is the answer. Future clashes will not be along nineteenth-century lines, but will center around what I've

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described elsewhere as "boomerangs"—increased environmental destruction and, perhaps, blackmail; more drugs flowing, unstoppable tides of immigration; economic instability, especially job losses as transnational corporations pull up stakes; and more of what he calls a "bewildering number of conflicts."

More and more, foreign policy will have immediate domestic consequences. We can either have the undivided reign of the free market (akin to the freedom of the fox in the henhouse) which necessarily excludes most people in the world and damages the natural base on which we all ultimately rely; or we can attempt to create a network of what I can only call, for want of a better name, ecological welfare states. Since Hoffmann has taken the lead on prescriptions, I'll follow suit and suggest that the United States should perhaps give it some thought.

J. Bryan Hehir

Stanley Hoffmann's description of the world confronting U.S. policymakers is characteristically complex in its analysis and clear in its definition of policy choices. Moreover, Hoffmann's work over many years provides a basic approach to the making of foreign policy. He has always given priority to an analysis of the dynamics and structure of the international system in the shaping of U.S. choices.

Hoffmann's method is particularly useful in an assessment of U.S. policy options in the 1990s because of the profound transformation that has occurred in international politics. The depth and nature of that transformation as well as its likely consequences are topics that divide both analysts and diplomats, inside and outside the policy-making process.

The dominant description of the change is the transition from the cold war order of politics to the post–cold war world. This in fact is only one dimension of a more complex process at work in international politics in the 1990s. The collapse of the cold war amounts to a change in the structure of power in world affairs. A second dimension of change, distinct from the first but intensified by it, involves the principles of order by which international relations have been understood and governed for three centuries.

The change in the structure of power has been caused by the collapse of the bipolar world that made the cold war pattern of politics so familiar to analysts and diplomats alike. All agree that bipolarity is gone; there is less agreement on what is supplanting it. Contending conceptions run from a unipolar view of U.S. dominance, to a new multipolar balance-of-power system involving the United States, Europe, Japan, China, and Russia, to an argument, advanced by Hoffmann and others, that neither unipolarity nor a revivified balance of power captures the complexity of the present world order. They distinguish instead different kinds of power (political, military, economic), which in turn yield multiple levels of balance at work in the world. A unipolar military order can coexist with a multipolar economic order, neither of which is adequate to explain Bosnia or Rwanda, situations that are not primarily shaped by the external balance.

The complexity of the structure of power debate is a principal reason why Hoffmann is not concerned that a single "Clinton Doctrine" has not emerged in the first half of this administration. Doctrines can be helpful in defining choices and determining priorities in policy, but only if the doctrine accurately responds to the world it seeks to shape. The unresolved analytical debate about the structure of power in the 1990s is a good sign that the quest for a doctrine is at least premature.

That judgment is strengthened by the recognition that the changing structure of power is only one dimension of the forces at work in the world of the 1990s. The twin principles of international order, the sovereignty of states

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and the prohibition against intervention in their internal affairs, are both in flux. Neither state sovereignty nor intervention has the clear status and meaning that has marked other periods of international relations. These concepts never meant that the sovereignty of all states was equally protected or that nonintervention held absolutely, but there was a presumption that both should be respected. A combination of factors and forces (political, economic, and normative), has eroded the protection that sovereignty once offered states and has led to calls for a reevaluation of the role nonintervention plays in international society.

The crucial characteristic of the 1990s for U.S. foreign policy is the way in which these two major shifts in the international system—the structure of power and the principles of order—intersect in the daily dynamic of world politics. The forces affecting sovereignty and nonintervention have been at work for over two decades, but the collapse of the cold war structure of power provides new impetus to the pressures on both. The dominant debates of the Clinton presidency—Bosnia, Somalia, Haiti, Rwanda—are less about the geopolitical structure of power than they are about principles of order. The collapse of the cold war lessened the geopolitical dangers surrounding intervention, raised the expectations of many about the possibilities of international order, and, at the same time, unleashed forces of internal conflict long dormant within states.

The moral fabric of the sovereignty-nonintervention compact was always thin, but the danger of legitimating intervention in the cold war world discouraged any significant effort to recast prevailing principles of order. Increased expectations of the international community inevitably focus on what the U.S. role will be in a changing structure of power and order in the world. The Clinton administration has argued that it has managed well the broader geopolitical issues of the structure of power (for example, relations with Russia and the Middle East), yet has been under constant criticism because of the internal conflicts within "failed states." One can be persuaded of the basic point in this *apologia*, yet not convinced that the two kinds of issues (structure of power and principles of order) can be kept that separate. Bosnia and North Korea combine aspects of "high politics" (structure of power issues) with issues of sovereignty and intervention. Failure to find a way through the catastrophe of Haiti will not change the structure of power, but will affect the reputation and standing of the United States in the eyes of others.

Stanley Hoffmann's call for a U.S. policy of "involvement without overexpansion" requires that the administration confront issues of structure and order together. Nuclear proliferation and intervention illustrate the intersection of the two. In the case of North Korea, protecting the principle of nonproliferation requires U.S. involvement in a leadership role—defining the threat posed by proliferation and catalyzing a political and military consensus in response to the threat. But it would be overexpansion of the U.S. role, in my judgment, to undertake a unilateral military response to the Korean threat. Reshaping principles of order to allow for intervention in the face of such systematic threats as proliferation involves attending to the need for multilateral authorization and participation in any military response. Concern for *how* systematic threats to the structure of power are met in the 1990s means establishing the right precedents of order. Legitimizing unilateral responses to proliferation is a recipe for chaos.

In a similar fashion, the need to expand the reasons justifying intervention in response to atrocities within states should be joined with a healthy respect for the role nonintervention has played in a world of very unequal states. Legitimating international interventions should not be equated with expanding the interventionary role of the major actors in the structure of power. Major states should help fund and authorize interventions through regional and international bodies, but not lead them. There is little public support in the United States today for "overinvolvement" in world affairs. By itself this tendency is neither adequate as a guide for policy nor entirely unhealthy. Domes-

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tic restraint can be one dimension of a broader view of the U.S. role that recognizes that reshaping the structure of power and redefining principles of order are U.S. responsibilities, but not uniquely U.S. prerogatives. Involvements means being part of a process that will collapse without us, but will not yield to a script written in Washington.

Martin Peretz

Stanley Hoffmann seems to believe that the United States cannot and really should not behave as the singular great power that it is. He offers as an alternative full American membership in "a kind of world steering committee" of various regional and global powers that would regulate their own behavior and make rules as to the permissible behavior of others. There is a sleight-of-hand in this proposal in that it equates the palpable capabilities of the United States with the capabilities of lesser states. But there are no other global powers, even though France sent its epaulets and berets into Rwanda and the Russians still serve as the putative co-conveners of the Middle East peace talks.

Hoffmann is especially concerned to strengthen the hands of the Russian government whose authority is already unclear within its own (unclear) borders. In this he agrees with Strobe Talbott: Moscow is to be propitiated at almost all costs. Let's be concrete: this means we will let Yeltsin have his way in Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia, Moldova, and perhaps in the Baltics, as well, because otherwise, we fear, he will fall to his enemies. Both Talbott and Hoffmann hanker for the structural clarity of the cold war, which put its obvious constraints on Washington, and they would prop Russia up to simulate the old equilibrium. But a simulation it will remain. Many of the old constraints—and possibly all—no longer obtain. If, for example, the United States wanted to lift the arms embargo against Bosnia, it could. Yeltsin will not, in retribution, send his troops to Serbia even if he would wish to; and if he were to do that, the non-violent price extracted by our government would be devastating. If the generals ultimately take control, or the old communists, they take control of stubborn chaos. This utter imbalance is a new experience. Getting used to it will take time. But it is a fact.

Alas, the world steering committee is also a fact of sorts. It has been operating for some time. In the 1991 Gulf War, it worked as a cover for American forces that turned the Republican guards out of Kuwait and ended the immediate threat to Saudi Arabia, whose security is an undisputed U.S. interest. (This interest, by the way, is why the Clinton administration should have declared the shelling of the civilian population of Aden in South Yemen "intolerable." Had that happened, the neighboring Arab countries would have taken care by themselves of Saddam Hussein's wartime ally in Sana, North Yemen. And the old principle—"Don't fuck with Dick Tracy!"—would have been reasserted.) But as soon as the limited ends of the Gulf War were achieved, this newly mobilized and ad hoc version of Hoffmann's committee made clear that it wouldn't sanction the overthrow of Saddam, let alone Iraq's dismemberment into a more logical and humane cartography. As a consequence of the veto the United States gave various regional powers in exchange for allowing us to turn back the Iraqi invasion, the Kurds and Shi'a of Iraq have had visited on them the most excruciating forms of death and destruction. During the Gulf crisis, I heard Hoffmann tell a Harvard audience that a model for solving the problems of these groups might be found in the minorities treaties that followed from Versailles. But this would truly be repeating history as farce.

Whether ad hoc or institutionalized in the United Nations, concerts of nations usually find a way not to deal with the most pressing human needs. Their search for an elusive consensus is the standing excuse for doing

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nothing. This is the meaning of the calvary in Bosnia. Issuing continuing resolutions and edicts that its sponsors will not really back, the coalitions patched together at NATO and on the East River failed to impress the Serbs, which is to say they failed to make the Serbs afraid. Unafraid, the Serbs pursued their war. The lives of the "peacekeepers" became more important than the lives of the ordinary populace. As I write, the powers are now pushing on the poor Bosnians a map designed, as it were, for genocide.

Hoffmann's faith in the United Nations is endearing. When I was growing up in New York, on the wall of one of my classrooms hung a poster proclaiming the United Nations "mankind's last best hope." It is no hope at all. It merely routinizes the enmities and competing ambitions of the countries that comprise it. Were the five permanent members of the Security Council united in their purposes and in their values, the UN might be more effective though not necessarily more just. The one state-one vote principle in the General Assembly is a joke. In no significant instance where large numbers of lives were at risk and in no instance where a "small" conflict seemed destined to become "big" was the United Nations able to affect history. The fact is that the UN has been utterly unable to mobilize for life even when the enemy is not an armed state or an armed doctrine but merely a natural disaster.

Nonetheless, Hoffmann has huge aspirations for what he calls the "concert policy," of which the United Nations is an intrinsic element. He is also impressed by how one problem relates to another. Analytic linkage leads him to prescriptive linkage. For example, he calls for "the resolution of those disputes whose festering feeds the onslaught of Islamic fundamentalism not only against 'the West' but against secular Muslim forces and regimes." This is fierce prose; note the alliteratives. So what are these festering feeds? One of them is the conflict between India and Pakistan. But not that alone. "I am thinking of the Palestinian issue," writes Hoffmann. Big surprise. But what really has this to do with Muslim extremism—a more accurate characterization than fundamentalism, which connotes literal fidelity to text and is not apposite in Algeria or the Sudan, in Afghanistan or even in Egypt? Exactly nothing. Whatever challenge Islamic militancy poses to, say, the Mubarak regime in Cairo would not be diminished a whit were Arafat to be crowned before an assembly of the faithful in Jerusalem. Religious extremism has complicated sources in the Muslim world. But Zionism is not one of them. The fact is that the secular, rhetorically socialist regimes in the Arab and Islamic orbits have failed, and they have frustrated the masses who gathered exuberantly under their banners. These regimes were also neutralist and internationalist, in their way, and they promised their peoples a big role in world affairs, a big role in the concert of nations. But they have produced none of this; they can't even produce jobs. This is one reason why Islamic extremism is emerging now, and it is reprehensible for Hoffmann to put the causes of a half-planetary happening at the feet of Israel. The true reasons for the rise of the chiliasts in Islam happen also to be reasons that can't be ameliorated by an executive committee of weighty states.

Still, let's look at the Palestinian issue. Such progress as has been made to resolve it was made altogether outside the concert of nations. The problem had been addressed for years through various expressions of Hoffmann's steering committee, and each of these ventures was a failure. What succeeded was a rogue Israeli operation out of the foreign ministry encountering some rogue Palestinians who weren't quite sure of their standing in Tunis. This is a development that doesn't fit any of the received models of international relations behavior.

This development brings no credit to the United States either. The Israelis went it alone because they feared that by working directly with Washington on agreements with their neighbors they would enmesh themselves precisely in the kind of process envisioned by Hoffmann. They had already experienced such multilateral brokerage in which each intermediary player used the process to advance its own

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stake. The members of the steering committee are never simply agents of plausible justice; they are always acting for themselves. Of course, the United States also acts for itself. But, given its complicated relations with almost all the parties to the Middle East conflict, its interests are not fundamentally inconsistent with the long-run stability of them all. This could not be said of the former Soviet Union or, let us say, of France, the Charles Boyer of the international arena.

The United States still has the assets to play the defining role of the one super-power. But, right now, under President Clinton, it does not have the will to do so. As a result, it is frittering away its advantages, both military and political. One reason it has come to this pass is that many around the president, and many Democrats generally, prefer that regional and international alliances and authorities take up the multiple burdens of a distressed world. They have been persuaded by arguments like Hoffmann's. But such bodies, when and where they exist, will not do this; and their constituent nations are, in any case, not much moved by what moves Americans. Here, at least, our very diversity makes us more sensitive to the sufferings of faraway peoples and to their hopes. This does not mean that we should or could take up the burdens everywhere. But we should be willing to take them up here and there, and perhaps somewhere else. Great wars no longer threaten our instinct to behave idealistically in world affairs; Russia will not unleash nuclear weapons against us, or even tanks. Wherever we assert our power in behalf of democracy and of life, our interests will not suffer. This is a time of opportunity for the United States to do good for others and for itself. Most likely, we will let these opportunities pass in the deluded belief that some steering committee of diplomats will be better motivated. Alas, decency still depends on us.□

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Jürgen Habermas

BURDENS OF THE DOUBLE PAST

We print here a substantial part of the testimony given in May of this year by the political philosopher Jürgen Habermas at a public hearing of a Commission of Inquiry of the German Parliament on "the history and consequences of the SED dictatorship" (SED is the German acronym for Socialist Unity party, the Communist party that ruled East Germany). Habermas used this opportunity to present his ideas on "constitutional patriotism," civil rights, and the need for a complex and open engagement with German history. We have edited the translation for American readers; elisions are clearly marked.—EDS.

The two previous hearings were concerned with the interpretation of facts. The final discussion treats a question of another nature: How are we to . . . foster a political culture that will stabilize the democratic constitutional state? Because this question possesses a normative character, I will not assume the role of a scientific expert, but rather will view myself as an intellectual participating in a public discussion. For with this final hearing, the commission itself has joined that public process of "coming to terms with the history of the two German dictatorships" that we have chosen as our subject. You have divided the question of the importance of this process for the continued existence of democracy into four subquestions, to which I will respond in order. [The fourth subquestion is here omitted—EDS.]

1. *What significance does this coming to terms with the past possess for the stability of the democratic order and its social values?*

The expression "coming to terms with the past" derives from the title of an essay, written in 1959, in which Theodor Adorno advocated a public discussion of the period of National Socialism. Ever since, we have been witness to a controversy over the advantages and disadvantages of dealing intellectually with this past, including its darkest aspects. Those who oppose the process fear the destabilizing effect of such historical pedagogy. Constant reflection, they say, weakens the traditions from which the political self-image of a nation must nourish itself. Instead of bringing disturbing pasts to consciousness, they demand the marshaling of pasts that can be affirmed. A similar controversy was sparked after 1989 by the question of whether the East German secret police files should be made public. I consider this opposition of . . . communicative hushing-up and self-destructive moralizing to be a false polarity—for the following reasons:

(1) First of all, I doubt whether there exists any option at all between cover-up and self-criticism. The warding off of painful experiences is not a function of the will and consciousness. Certainly, an amnesty or the secrecy of documents can be decreed, but a suppression of dissonant memories, even if it were functional, cannot be logically arranged. . . . Awkward truths are hard to control; at any time they can destroy the veil of an illusory or merely uncomfortably skewed self-image. For this, by the way, the history of the Federal Republic of Germany offers an example. Amid the favorable constellations of the early postwar period, among a population spared from crises, something like an economically and socially based "trust in the system"

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had formed. But only by way of the normative debate over the National Socialist past, demanded in the sixties, did this trust in the system transform itself into a constitutional loyalty anchored in the convictions of a liberal political culture.

(2) Furthermore, the notion is misleading that the political order of a modern polity could rest on a background consensus the functioning of which came about in a wholly natural way, a background consensus that goes unquestioned. What unites the citizens of a society shaped by social, cultural, and philosophical [*weltanschaulich*] pluralism are first of all the abstract principles of an artificial republican order, created through the medium of law. These constitutional principles can only take root in the hearts of the citizens once they have had good experiences with democratic institutions and have accustomed themselves to conditions of political freedom. In so doing, they also learn, within the prevailing national context, to comprehend the republic and its Constitution as an attainment. Without a historical, consciously formed vision of this kind, patriotic ties deriving from and relating to the Constitution cannot come about. For us such ties are connected, for example, with pride in a successful civil rights movement, but also with the dates 1848 and 1871, with the cruelty of two world wars, the bitterness of two dictatorships, and the horror at a human catastrophe—that is, with untold sacrifices, from which no meaning can be gained except that of a denial of every ultimate claim by the state.

(3) Contrary to a widespread misunderstanding, it should be noted finally that the demand to come to terms with this past implies no blind trust in the dynamic of consciousness. Rather . . . we can only learn from a history that we regard as a critical authority. History as "teacher" is an old idea; but in its affirmative versions it is misleading. At least this much we can grasp from the often false use of historiography. With their anthropological view of history, the ancients were interested in what endures within what is ever changing; for them history was something like a treasure vault of illustrative events worthy of emulation. But the moderns, who with their historically sharpened consciousness were more interested in the particular and unique, also wanted to learn something positive from history. The philosophers of history searched for reason in history; the historicists wanted to recognize what was their own in the mirror of the other; the practitioners of hermeneutics evoked the power of the classical models. But we have become skeptical of the premise that underlies all three versions: that we learn something from history only if it has something affirmative to tell us. The premise is hardly convincing, for in other areas, too, we tend to learn from negative experiences, from disappointments, that we attempt to avoid in the future. This applies in equal measure to the collective fates of peoples and to individual life stories. . . .

2. *What does the legacy of two dictatorships mean for German culture today and in the future?*

The Federal Republic has not only become the successor of the German Reich according to international law, but it has also assumed political responsibility for the consequences of the Third Reich. The joining of the former GDR [German Democratic Republic] to the Federal Republic did not change the legal succession at all, but it did cause some changes in the political-historical circumstances of inheritance. The burden of the National Socialist past is overlain by the legacy of a brief Stalinist and a longer authoritarian, post-Stalinist past.

This succession of two dictatorships can serve as an instructive illumination of totalitarian commonalities and direct one's attention to the structural dispossession of citizens who were robbed of their social and legal autonomy. When I survey the list of topics on which the parliamentary Commission of Inquiry has sought expert opinions—the combining of party and state machinery, the comprehensive organization of national security, justice and the penal system, the militarization of society, the methods of compulsory collectivization, the role of party factions and mass organizations, the media as an instrument of power, the reorganization of the educational system, psychosocial repression affecting daily life, and

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so on—there emerges the picture of a panoptic state, which not only directly subverted public life . . . but also its foundation, civil society and the private sphere. If one regards this picture as a negative, there emerges the counterimage of a legal system that guarantees all citizens equal private and public autonomy, abolishes the amalgamation of powers, and erects barriers against state injustice.

Of course, the harsh illumination of this second past must not allow the remembrance of the first to pale. The National Socialist period is unmistakably marked by the officially proclaimed, bureaucratically carried out exclusion of an internal enemy defined according to ascriptive characteristics—and the total extermination of this enemy by industrial means. This horrible fact makes us conscious of the normative core of the democratic constitutional state: symmetrical relationships of recognition that guarantee equal respect to all. Mutual recognition must not be restricted to the members of a homogeneous people defending themselves against external and internal enemies, as Carl Schmitt thought and his followers still maintain today. . . . It does not apply to a nation of national comrades [*Volksgenossen*] united by their ethnic origin, but rather to a nation of citizens united by equal rights. For the citizens of the Federal Republic, therefore, the decisive lesson of 1989 and 1990 does not consist in the restoration of a nation-state, nor in the entry of their compatriots into a prospering society regulated by civil law, but rather in the gaining of civil rights and the elimination of a totalitarian regime.

3. *How can political education impart knowledge about the two German dictatorships, and how can awareness of the threat to free democracies be kept alive?*

The "double past" places unusually great demands on one's perceptiveness and ability to differentiate, on one's power of judgment, tolerance, and self-criticism. Allow me to call four difficulties to mind.

(1) The comparison of the two dictatorships demands of the historians who inform us about their differences and similarities, but also of us citizens, the readiness to distance ourselves from our own political preconceptions. For the needs of their own legitimation both regimes availed themselves of ideas that on the one hand go back to the nineteenth century, but on the other hand still govern the present. The scheme of left and right, which one ought not to dismiss hastily, makes itself felt in a disturbing way precisely when one compares the two dictatorships. While those on the "right" tend to deny differences [between the two], those on the "left" are mainly intent on recognizing them. The left must not be blind to the specific commonalities of totalitarian regimes and must apply the same standard to both sides. In turn, the right must not level out the differences or play them down. In saying this, I am not only thinking of differences that result from the contradictory content of their ideologies, from the entirely different kind of political criminality, from the differing life span of the regimes and the corresponding degree of normalization of daily living conditions. I am also thinking of the fact that future generations will be held liable in a different manner for National Socialism, which originated in their own country and was supported by broad consent, than for an authoritarian socialism imposed by force that was no more than accepted by the population.

Today for the first time, an antitotalitarian consensus can be formed that merits the name because it is not selective. This consensus provides a common basis on which differentiation between right and left becomes possible. This may be easier for younger and future generations than for us, the elders. Only if political socialization does not take place under conditions of radical suspicion against internal enemies can liberal and democratic convictions forgo the midwifery of anticommunism or antifacism.

(2) A second difficulty is connected with another aspect of the "double past." The actual coming to terms with GDR history is taking place before the background of denazification. . . . On the one hand, the entirely different starting positions of 1945 and 1989 rule out conducting "destasification" [Stasi was the East German secret police] according to the model of denazification . . . On the other hand,

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in the meantime the standards of criticism have changed. Because the attempt to come to grips with the National Socialist period only took place superficially in the East of Germany, and in the West only with considerable delay, there now exists the readiness to make up with greater energy for what was neglected after 1945. The meaning of the mass crimes of National Socialism was only comprehended gradually. . . . (Incidentally, this applies not only to us. An increased sensitivity toward the overpowered victims has [belatedly] stirred bad memories in other countries too—memories of the destruction of Indian native cultures, of the bloody suppression of the revolt in Vendée, the Armenian genocide, the dispossession and destruction of the kulaks, and so on.) We find ourselves in a dilemma: if today, with the good intention of making up for the errors of a problematic "attempt to master the past" we apply standards other than those of the time, we are violating the principle of equal treatment. This paradoxical form of a not entirely unwarranted unfairness can be seen above all in the personal hardships caused by a changeover among the elite (for example, in the purge of the [East German] universities). In principle, the changeover was desirable, but it was carried out in a comparatively more rigorous manner.

(3) A third difficulty results from the asymmetrical division of the inherited burdens. The Germans in East and West only share the first past. They participate in the history of the GDR in different ways: The one side is caught up in it body and soul as both perpetrators and victims; the other side influenced developments in the GDR at most from without, whether through "inter-German" or through "international" relationships. Naturally, the policies of the various West German governments, the reaction of the West German population to the national division and to the fate of their East German compatriots, the contacts and lack of contacts between the two sides, the role of the media and the intellectuals, and so on, are of great interest for the coming to terms with the interdependencies of both postwar histories. However, these separate histories were also constitutive of different contexts of experience. A precipitous leveling of these differences will only lead to the error of backward-looking appeals to the false continuities of tradition. If we do not wish a return to the old stale, oppressive German climate, we must see to it that the very gradual civilizing of the Federal Republic does not vanish behind artificially constructed symmetries between the two partial states. . . .

Only if we admit to the asymmetrical circumstances of inheritance in East and West, only if we do not define the process of coming to terms with the past as a *seamless* undertaking, will we create no illusions for ourselves about the obstacles that must be overcome along this path. The population of the former GDR no longer has at its disposal a public sphere of its own, uninfluenced by the media of western Germany. It is unable to conduct the discourse that will lead to self-understanding in regard to its second past within its own four walls. This demands special restraint from us in the West, who through no merit of our own escaped the specific entanglements of state socialism.

(4) Until now we have been discussing differentiations between the two dictatorships, the two processes of coming to terms with the past, and the two postwar histories. But we must also differentiate between the normative viewpoints from which the past is judged. On the one hand, a dictatorial regime leaves behind the need for satisfaction, for the *creation of political justice*, to the degree that this is possible; on the other hand, it leaves behind the wish for a *change in mentality among the population* that will lead to and stabilize democratic conditions. The material worked up by the Commission of Inquiry serves both purposes. However, the goal of a democratic transformation of consciousness should stand in the foreground.

Questions of justice can be of a legal or a moral nature. They relate to the redressing of injustices that were committed and to individually assignable guilt. Legal charges and moral reproaches are directed by one party against the other. They are the expression of the rupture between perpetrators and victims. The proceedings initiated thereby aim at reconciliation: the

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intersubjective acknowledgment of verdicts pronounced in the light of valid norms is intended to restore an order that was violated. This goal of political justice is mainly attained through the means of criminal law and compensation by civil law. However, since for good reason narrow limits are placed on legal enforcement, many cases that entail political and moral responsibility elude its jurisdiction. Such cases are then left up to political proceedings . . . or informal public discussions (for example, the conflict of civil rights campaigners or exiled writers with the representatives and informers of the old regime).

The questions that are discussed in common by the members of a collective, aimed at gaining ethical-political self-understanding, have a different character. Unlike questions of justice, which are decided by a neutral third party, questions that affect collective identity demand answers from the perspective of the first-person plural. This perspective also brings into view pathologies of a common life, the formative susceptibilities of an everyday normality gone wrong—but not the individually accountable actions that from the standpoint of political justice separate the incriminated and the guiltless from one another. Coming to terms with a politically incriminating past, for which all participants, even the opposition, bear responsibility, finds its main focus in consciousness-altering processes that lead to self-understanding. These can be stimulated, but not brought about by formal means.

Now, the commission ought to contemplate a danger that has arisen for the political culture of the expanded Federal Republic from the unintended consequences of an unfortunate method of national unification. While [after 1945] the resistance movement of 20 July, however selectively it was described, was incorporated into the founding idea of the Federal Republic, today the historic accomplishment of the civil rights movement [of East Germany] is slipping from national memory. It should have been possible for it to attain a fitting symbolic representation in the founding of a new republic. Because the very discussion of [such a founding] was anxiously warded off, the cry "We are the people" has remained without a lasting echo. This is another reason why those East German compatriots, who feel hurt by a process of unification that was demeaning in many respects, are meanwhile turning to the past. They are clinging to old identities instead of drawing self-assurance from their own contribution to democracy. . . .

Translated by SIDNEY ROSENFELD and STELLA P. ROSENFELD □

In Memoriam

The *Dissent* community suffered two serious losses these past months. In June, Ferenc Fehér, an editor since 1990 and an important figure in the Central European intellectual emigration, died in Budapest. In August, Rose Laub Coser, who was present at the creation of *Dissent* and had been engaged ever since in the work of the magazine as editor, contributor, and active participant in our internal political debates, died in Wellfleet, Mass. We will carry memorial essays on both of them in future issues.□

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Eugene Goodheart

THE PASSION OF REASON

Reflections on Primo Levi and Jean Améry

The dominant wisdom about the Holocaust is that its enormity surpasses comprehension. Having shattered traditional faith (how could God have permitted it to happen?), the Holocaust has acquired the sanctity of deity and become the object of a kind of reverence. Like a religious mystery, it has been shrouded with taboos. Silence is better than speech, because speech trivializes the mystery by representing the events in familiar terms. The sense of outrage that greeted Hannah Arendt's thesis about the banality of evil can in part be explained by the feeling that she had violated the mystery in translating the experience into the quotidian. Theodor Adorno writes from a sense of the sanctity of the experience, its unspeakableness, when he declares the impossibility and immorality of any writing about the Holocaust. The uniqueness of the Holocaust precludes comparisons, and comparison is essential to discourse. So better silence than speech or, if speech is inescapable, it must always know its limitations and finally confess its impotence. Speech is necessary, because total silence would mean oblivion, and the moral imperative is never to forget.

I have no wish to minimize the enormity of the Holocaust or to trivialize it with false comparisons. There is no greater intellectual and moral horror than contemporary efforts at Holocaust revisionism, which claim either that the enormity has been exaggerated or that it never took place. But I cannot escape the impression that those who insist on the Holocaust as the modern version of the divine mystery, sui generis and intransitive, may inadvertently mystify what can be understood and explained. To speak or even not to speak in this way is paradoxically to threaten the Holocaust with a portentous verbal inflation that deprives us of a moral discourse in which discriminations and judgments can be made. The sacredness of the event is often displaced to the words that try to represent it. Writing or speech, not silence, becomes the medium of piety. For George Steiner, the ideal reading of books and documents of survivors is an uncritical reverential act:

> These books and the documents that have survived are not for "review." Not unless "review" signifies, as perhaps it should in these instances, a "seeing-again," over and over. As in some Borges fable, the only completely decent "review" of the *Warsaw Diary* or of Eli Wiesel's *Night* would be to re-copy the book, line by line, pausing at the names of the dead and the names of the children as the orthodox scribe pauses, when re-copying the Bible, at the Hallowed name of God. Until we know many of the words by *heart* (knowledge deeper than mind) and can repeat a few at the break of morning to remind ourselves that we live *after*. . . . [1]

But not all the witnesses mean to invite reverence. Survivors such as Primo Levi and Jean Améry write from a strenuous moral point of view, springing from the rationalism of the classical Enlightenment. They have no quarrel with God, because they never believed in him. They do not claim to understand everything, for not everything is morally intelligible, but they do not deal in mysteries or wish to make them sacrosanct. They "respect" the mystery of the monstrous evil that produced the Holocaust, but that is not where their focus is.

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The moral intelligence can still engage the predicaments and dilemmas of the victim. For them the question is: how is it possible to remain human in the grip of extremity? In the presence of mystery all one can do is to submit or to rage. Améry and Levi, in their passionate commitment to moral reason (and their avoidance of matters of faith), speculate and invite us to speculate about the possibility of moral freedom. Above all, they wish to understand what can be understood, make comparisons where they are appropriate, and insist upon the discriminations that are the basis for moral judgment. Their writings are characterized by an intellectual modesty that distinguishes them from the hubristic rationalism of the classical Enlightenment. They are as severe with the pretensions of a moral reason that believes it can master the world as any anti-rationalist critic—without, however, abandoning the cause of moral reason.

No one knows better than Levi or Améry how the cultured man, who has only the resources of a secular culture, often exhibits timidity, fear, even collaboration with the enemy in situations of totalitarian extremity. In the camps, Levi writes, "culture could be useful even if only in some marginal cases, and for brief periods; it could enhance an hour, establish a fleeting bond with a companion, keep the mind healthy. *It definitely was not useful in orienting oneself and understanding*"[2] (my emphasis). These lines come from an essay, "The Intellectual at Auschwitz," in Levi's posthumous collection of essays, *The Drowned and The Saved*. The occasion for the essay is a remarkable work of fellow survivor Jean Améry, *At the Mind's Limits*, in which Améry exposes the utter defenselessness of the agnostic intellectual. Without a trade or a craft, the intellectual was particularly vulnerable in his external situation. "In the camp he becomes an unskilled laborer, who had to do his job in the open—which meant in most cases that the sentence was already passed on him. . . . Camp life demanded above all bodily agility and physical courage that bordered on brutality,"[3] and the intellectual generally proved to be inadequate to the demand. But the internal situation was even worse. The intellectual found himself betrayed by the very qualities that were virtues outside of the camp: rationality, the questioning and self-questioning spirit. "Absolute intellectual tolerance and the methodological doubting of the intellectual became factors in his auto-destruction."

Rational questioning turns upon itself, and the man of reason loses confidence in reason. Since skepticism of the radical kind teaches that there are no grounded natural rights or moral categories, power becomes its own justification.

> The intellectual . . . who after the collapse of his initial inner resistance had recognized that what may not be, very well could be, who experienced the logic of the SS as a reality that proved itself by the hour, now took a few fateful steps further in his thinking. Were not those who were preparing to destroy him in the right, owing to the undeniable fact that they were the stronger ones?

This is a devastating indictment, more severe than Levi's exposure of the ineffectuality of the cultured man, but very much in the same spirit. The criticism is all the more telling in the contrast both Levi and Améry make between the fate of the agnostic and that of the believer. "The non-agnostic, the believers in any belief whatsoever resisted the seduction of power, provided they were not believers in the National Socialist doctrine," Levi writes. Unlike the intellectual, who on Améry's account becomes complicit in his own dehumanization when he acknowledges the "rightness" of the power of his torturers, the believer (whether Christian, Jewish, or Marxist) remains morally intact because, in Améry's words, he experiences himself as "part of a spiritual community that is interrupted nowhere, not even in Auschwitz."

In Améry the sense of the pathos of the agnostic intellectual verges on contempt, one is tempted to say self-contempt. But neither Améry nor Levi feels in any way attracted by the faiths that sustain others. For them any faith seems to be a delusion in the face of the evil they experienced in the concentration camp. In Levi's words, "actually the experience of the Lager with its frightful iniquity confirmed me in my nonbelief. It prevented, and still prevents

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me from conceiving of any form of providence or transcendent justice." And Améry, for all his grudging admiration for the believer who meets his fate with confidence, has no curiosity about "a religious grace that for me did not exist, or about an ideology whose errors and false conclusions I felt I had seen through." Améry's intellectual honesty and lucidity would make it morally impossible for him to embrace an ideology or a faith.

There may be something misleading in the severity with which Améry exposes the fecklessness of the agnostic intellectual in the face of power. He himself hardly exemplifies the intellectual who has capitulated to power. On the contrary, he displays exemplary qualities of physical and moral courage. He describes an episode in which he traded blows with a torturer, knowing that he would only suffer more blows, because it was the only way that he could preserve his dignity:

> In Auschwitz he once hit me in the face because of a trifle; that is how he was used to dealing with all the Jews under his command. At this moment—I felt it with piercing clarity—it was up to me to go a step further in my prolonged appeals case against society. In open revolt I struck Juszek in the face in turn. My human dignity lay in this punch to his jaw—and that it was in the end I, the physically much weaker man, who succumbed and was woefully thrashed, meant nothing to me. Painfully beaten, I was satisfied with myself. But not, as one might think, for reasons of courage and honor, but only because I had grasped well that there are situations in life in which our body is our entire self and our entire fate. I was my body and nothing else: in hunger, in the blow that I suffered, in the blow that I dealt. My body, debilitated and crusted with filth, was my calamity. My body, when it tensed to strike, was my physical and metaphysical dignity.

Améry seems immune to the temptations of power; indeed, his work breathes contempt for it. His blows will only betray his vulnerability to the superior strength of the other, and he knows it. He strikes back because his dignity as a living being is at stake, and his dignity blocked the path of a radical skepticism that would put his moral convictions in doubt.

This is a far cry from the logic of his generic intellectual who acquiesces in his own destruction because might makes right. The danger, as Levi points out, is not that Améry, the agnostic intellectual, will lose his soul to power, but that in his "courageous decision to leave the ivory tower and go down into the battlefield," he will be led "to positions of such severity and intransigence as to make him incapable of finding joy in life, indeed of living." Améry survived the camps only to take his own life.

How do we account for the contradiction between the portrait of the intellectual that Améry presents and his own apparently disconfirming behavior? There is an implicit answer to the question in an essay Améry wrote in which he declares his allegiance to the classical Enlightenment.

> I profess loyalty to enlightenment, specifically to the *classical* enlightenment—as a *philosophia perennis* that contains all of its own correctives, so that it is an idle game dialectically to dissect it. I stand up for analytical reason and its language, which is logic. In spite of all that we have had to experience, I believe that even today, as in the days of the Encyclopedists, knowledge leads to recognition and recognition to morality. And I maintain that it was not the Enlightenment that failed, as we have been assured ever since the first wave of the romantic counterenlightenment, but rather those who were appointed its guardians.[4]

Améry doesn't think of rationalism as an ideology or a faith, but in fact it functions as one: to speak of a *philosophia perennis* is to declare a belief in a world that can be challenged by moral reason, if not constituted by it. Améry would insist that his belief in reason is free of the mystifications of religious faith and Marxist ideology. It is a sign of mystification when a doctrine or dogma fails to perceive its own limitations, when it simply substitutes itself for the world. Améry's rationalism knows its limitations as the doctrines of religion and Marxism do not. Yet he possesses what seems like an ideological conviction about reason that contrasts sharply with his portrait of the self-doubting intellectual.

Neither Améry nor Levi illustrates in himself the particular vulnerability of the agnostic

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intellectual to the ravages of the camps. Neither their integrity nor their survival is a function of their philosophy. Courage and cowardice and all the virtues and vices are matters of character. Philosophies may authorize virtues, but they do not determine character. But a philosophy *is* an instrument of understanding, and the effect of Améry's and Levi's rationalism is to keep alive a kind of moral discourse in response to extremity that the Holocaust was supposed to have made impossible. Without ever losing respect for the enormity of the event, without minimizing the suffering, their own suffering, they are singularly free of a kind of piety before the event that paralyzes understanding or leads to self-righteousness. Both Améry and Levi apply to their experiences the "corrective" of the moral intelligence.

Their aim is to describe what occurred with the greatest accuracy and truthfulness. This is the task of the witness. But that is not all. As survivors of the event, they feel compelled to represent and understand their responses both at the time of their incarceration and after their liberation. The witness is not a generic character, indistinguishable from other witnesses. He is a particular individual, with a particular cast of mind and capacity for feeling. What emerges in *At the Mind's Limits* and *The Drowned and The Saved* are the extraordinary characters of men who emerged from the crucible of the Holocaust. ("Crucible" is an ironic concession to the murderers, for they thought of their monstrous project as an experiment.) Part of *our* witness as readers is to contemplate the characters of Levi and Améry and to meditate critically on their understanding and self-understandings.

Resentment and Reason

In bringing together Levi and Améry, I do not mean to conflate their views. It would violate the truth to homogenize the survivors of the Holocaust, even if they happen to be of the same philosophical persuasion. To do so would deny them the differences that mark them as individuals. Améry is driven by the emotion of resentment, Levi is not. In fact, it is Améry's resentment that troubles Levi's response to him. As a moral philosopher, Améry knows well the risks of resentment, and he defends the emotion with full knowledge of the criticism. Resentment, Nietzsche and Max Scheler have taught us, is the emotion of the weak and the victimized. The resentment accumulates, becoming, in Scheler's words, "an evil secretion in a sealed vessel, like prolonged impotence."[5] The desire for justice turns into a desire for revenge, and the sense of justice disappears. Resentment is the emotion that nourishes revolutionary ideologies, and only too often, as history shows, the revolutionary sense of justice. Améry of course knows the literature of and about resentment, but in what may appear to his readers an exercise in perversity, he affirms his own inextinguishable resentment and insists on its moral value. The targets of Améry's resentment are not only the criminals who committed monstrous and unpardonable crimes against humanity, but also a whole nation, which in its indifference or timidity or sheer cowardice or robotic obedience allowed these crimes to occur. Améry embraces the discredited doctrine of "collective guilt." He recognizes the possible pathology of his feelings, but he does not wish to concede his case prematurely to the psychologists. What does he mean to accomplish with his resentment? Its main object is the German good conscience that seems to have accompanied the prosperity that has risen from the ashes of Germany's defeat.

> It was not at all necessary that in German towns Jewish cemeteries and monuments for resistance fighters be desecrated. Conversations like the one I had in 1958 with a Southern German businessman over breakfast in the hotel were enough. Not without first politely inquiring whether I was an Israelite, the man tried to convince me that there was no longer any race hatred in his country. The German people bear no grudge against the Jewish people, he said. As proof he cited his government's magnanimous policy of reparations, which was, incidentally, well appreciated by the young state of Israel.

Améry cannot abide what he perceives to be self-satisfaction and lack of remorse, though he

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feels miserable in contemplating himself as a "Shylock, demanding his pound of flesh."

His resentment is ultimately a grievance against "the antimoral natural process of healing that time brings about, and by which I make the genuinely humane and absurd demand that time be turned back." The torturers, or *some* of them, have been punished: we are reminded of those who have escaped punishment and prospered. And what of their descendants? "To accuse the young would be just too inhuman, and according to universal concepts also unhistorical," writes this scrupulous resentful man. The most devastating effect of sadistic torture on his psyche is the loss of "trust in the world." He would "avenge" himself on the country that bred these torturers by inducing self-mistrust in their descendants. He wants what he calls the "unresolved conflict between victims and slaughterers [to be] externalized and actualized," though he never makes clear what externalization or actualization would entail. Historical memory is required if history is not to repeat itself, and historical memory means self-mistrust.

Améry does not consider the possible price of a deep and persistent self-mistrust in the "opposite camp," where it can turn into a destructive counter-resentment. By wanting to reverse history in order to produce the German revolution that never took place, he is asking for the impossible, and he knows it when he speaks of his "genuinely humane and *absurd* desire" (emphasis added). Of course, Améry's resentments need to be distinguished from the Nietzschean conception. Resentment, according to Nietzsche, luxuriates in imaginary grievances. There is nothing imaginary in Améry's resentments. Resentment declares itself against injustice, but is itself the source of injustice in its false accusations or in the disparity between the provocation and the emotion. No emotion is adequate to the enormity of the event that is the object of Améry's emotion. What he has in common with the resentful man is the futility of his passion.

Toward the end of the essay on "Resentments," Améry writes: "Perhaps already tomorrow [resentment] will lead me to self-condemnation, by having me see the moral desire for reversal as the half-brained chatter that it already is today for the rationally thinking know-it-alls." Améry, the rationalist, concedes the possible irrationality of his view, but there is implicit criticism of a comfortable rationalism that provides no vent for moral indignation. In its protest against nature ("the natural process of healing"), his resentment dramatizes the monstrous (that is, unnatural) character of the Holocaust. The wound inflicted will not heal with time; it is too deep, too awful, too terrible for the patience of time. The resentment itself is a wound, one of the deepest that the rational man can suffer. Améry's resentment illuminates the Holocaust as a premature rational response does not.

The visceral nonideological character of his resentment has compelling power because of the unparalleled enormity of the Holocaust and the system that bred it. Moreover, unlike the ideology critics who often desire the power and authority they decry in their adversaries, Améry in his resentment is singularly devoid of the desire for power. The risks incurred by his resentment are mainly internal. Since this is an emotion that one does not act upon, it can fester and turn upon the resenter, wearing away at the fiber of his being and perhaps destroy him. Resentment is an emotion compatible with suicide, as Levi himself remarks when he comments on "the positions of . . . severity and intransigence [that Améry took, which made] him incapable of finding joy in life, indeed of living."

In persisting in his resentment, does Améry in effect capitulate to the horror of the camps? He never conceded rightness to power as did the agnostic intellectuals he describes, but in taking his own life he may have implied that there is no self-sustaining answer to that power. Torture, he asserts, devalues the world for the victim, so even if the victim survives, the torturer has accomplished his goal. He describes sadism (the "philosophy" of the torturer) as the desire "to nullify this world" and "realize his own total sovereignty." By conceding the overwhelming power of the torturer over mind as well as body, he has apparently conceded victory to the torturer. For the survivor, or a certain kind of survivor, the

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triumph over Nazism changed nothing. The sadist posthumously accomplishes his task of annihilating the world.

But one may understand the logic of suicide differently. In acknowledging the overwhelming power of the Holocaust, it declares its radical refusal to abide it, to live within it. Suicide becomes an act of integrity, an implicit affirmation of the values the camps have rendered impossible. (One should not confuse survival with integrity. Levi remarks that the worst often survived, the worst being the cleverest, the most opportunistic, and the luckiest. We know that Levi, like many other survivors, never overcame his guilt for having survived.)

Terrence Des Pres has made a case for survival itself as a value in extremity. Against the view expressed by Bruno Bettelheim and others that ideals justify life and that one should be prepared to die for a cause, Des Pres affirms the survivor's "code" that life justifies ideals. But what does life itself signify? Des Pres offers the examples of Dostoyevsky and Bertrand Russell, who, close to death, experience a recovery (in Dostoyevsky's case, a last minute reprieve from a death sentence) and testify to the delight and value of simply being alive. But these examples seem irrelevant to the situation of life in the camps, where the threat (the word is too weak) is not simply to one's existence.[6] The aim of the camps is "to reduce us to beasts," says Levi; dehumanization, not death, is the worst that can befall a human being, which is the reason why it is important to have an ideal of what it means to be human. And one's humanity entails a capacity to "refuse consent," to resist the effort of the torturers to turn one into a beast. The willingness to die, even to take one's life, may be preferable to survival.

The logic of suicide can be resisted, as Levi resisted it *in his writing*, by an understanding of the world as not wholly defined by the extremity in which both Levi and Améry found themselves in the years of the Holocaust. The permanent value of Améry is that he dramatizes a real possibility, not an inevitability, that the world can be transformed into an extremity in which life itself becomes worthless: a realm of value has temporarily been expunged.

The testimony survives, and it tells us that the moral vulnerability of the agnostic intellectual, the person of culture, is not absolute. Both Levi and Améry exhibit in their writing a combination of character, intelligence, learning, and eloquence that apparently survived the degradation of the camps. Even Améry cannot disburden himself of the culture that proved so useless to him in the camps. His meditations are saturated with philosophical and literary culture. Goethe, Hegel, Sartre, Mann: they belong to the spiritual authority that makes us attend so closely to his writing. There are also telling references to literature in Levi's effort to understand what occurred in the camps, as in his quotation of a passage from *Measure for Measure*, which provides him with an image of despotism:

> Dressed in a little brief authority
> Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
> His glassy essence, like an angry ape
> Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
> As makes the angels weep.

This is after the fact and less compelling than the way cultural memory, Dante, for example, performed in Levi's mind while he was in the camps. Memories of Dante were of "great value. They made it possible for me to reestablish a link with the past, saving it from oblivion and reinforcing my identity. They convinced me that my mind, although besieged by everyday necessities, had not ceased to function. They elevated me in my own eyes and those of my interlocutor. They granted me a respite, ephemeral but hebetudinous, in fact liberating and differentiating; in short, a way to find myself." Levi here contradicts his own assertion that "culture was not useful in orienting oneself and understanding."

He devotes a chapter to the "Canto of Ulysses" in *Survival at Auschwitz*, recalling that a particular passage suddenly and inexplicably came to mind:

> Then of that age—old fire loftier born
> Began to mutter and move, as a wavering flame
> Wrestles against the wind and is over-born;
> And, like a speaking tongue vibrant to flame

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> Language, the tip of it flickering to and fro
> Threw out a voice and answered:
> "When I came . . . "

He expresses puzzlement about "how or why it came into my mind."[7] The passage becomes a sort of mantra (if we can speak in this way of the complexity and elaborateness of Levi's recollection), enabling him to defy the circumstances of his existence and sustain himself. One does not have to know how the passage came to his mind to be struck by how apt the memory of *The Inferno* is in the circumstances. Levi does not evoke the images of horror and degradation in the poem, beings frozen in ice, buried in excrement, suffering the most excruciating pain and without the promise of an end. *The Inferno* could be the poem of the Holocaust, were it not for the fact that even in hell the image of the human is preserved. It was Erich Auerbach, a refugee from Nazism, who revealed the extraordinary humanity of the condemned figures in Hell. Severe as divine punishment may be, they retain their human capacity. Dante's characters are given the "freedom" to relive their earthly pasts in imagination, a permanently recurrent Hell-defying imagination. When the pilgrim Dante encounters them, these pasts, filled with suffering of a kind different from what they experience in Hell, provoke his sympathy and we remember the condemned as they lived in the world. *The Inferno* in its intensity helps us see the even more radical extremity of the Holocaust. Dante's Hell is, after all, the work of an imagination, that of Dante's God, which also conceived Purgatory and Paradise. Purgatory and Paradise are inconceivable in the mind that produced the Holocaust. Levi in effect becomes a character in Dante's Hell, though, unlike Dante's character, undeserving of a place in it. Like Dante's characters, Levi "proves" in his very being the inextinguishability of the human face.

Judgment in the Gray Zone

What separates Améry and Levi is the character of their judgments. Améry's sense of extremity *tends* to divide the world sharply between victim and tormentor; he is less interested in the range of intermediate behavior that occurs in what Levi calls the gray zone. How, one might ask, can one question a sense of extremity where the Holocaust is concerned? Doesn't justice demand the utmost rigor in condemning the trimmers as well as the torturers, the compromisers as well as those who inflicted cruelties? It is difficult to regard these questions as anything but rhetorical. And yet they go to the heart of the difference between Améry and Levi. Levi's essay on "The Gray Zone" exhibits "pity and rigor" and a sensitivity to "extenuating circumstances" in the cases of persons who compromised or did not resist, which has no parallel in the work of Améry.

Levi focuses on the victims of the system who were degraded into collaboration: for instance, the *sonderkommandos*, the special squad of "privileged" inmates who were given enough to eat for a few months as a reward for running the crematoria. He acknowledges the horror, but he is not quick to judge—or rather he is quick only to judge the terrible system that turns even its victims to the performance of monstrous tasks:

> Every human being possesses a reserve of strength whose extent is unknown to him, be it large, small, or nonexistent, and only through extreme adversity can we evaluate it. Even apart from the extreme case of the Special Squads, often those of us who have returned, when we describe our vicissitudes, hear in response: "In your place I would not have lasted for a single day." This statement does not have a precise meaning: one is never in another's place. Each individual is so complex that there is no point in trying to foresee his behavior, all the more so in extreme situations; nor is it possible to foresee one's own behavior. Therefore I ask that we meditate on the story of "the crematorium ravens" with pity and rigor, but that judgment of them be suspended.

Levi's suspension of judgment is not an exercise in self-indulgence. It represents the moral sanity that the camps tried to and did extinguish. It is an answer to what he imagines to be the psychological self-justifying strategy (the rationale) of the Final Solution. "We, the master race, are your destroyers, but you are no

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better than we are; if we so wish, and we do so wish, we can destroy not only your bodies but also your souls, just as we have destroyed ours."

The gray zone is a feature of the moral life everywhere, but it has particular poignancy in situations of extremity. In ordinary situations, persons who conduct their lives in the gray zone are often the object of contempt: their equivocations and compromises, their failure to choose or decide, find little justification in the world outside of themselves. We often speak of these justifications as rationalizations. The compromises and failures reflect moral ineffectuality or cowardice. But the gray zone exists in a realm beyond risk or the efficacy of character. The effort of the camps is to reduce human beings to the level of sheer need in which choice or agency of any kind becomes virtually impossible. The camps are the ultimate machines of determinism. This may be to state the case hyperbolically, because even in the most extreme totalitarian situations there is some porousness, some room for maneuver. But the fact remains that the camps effectively eliminate the conditions of moral life.

So we are in the presence of a paradox when the moral intelligence retrospectively engages the events. Surely people reacted differently from one another, and their reactions proceeded from differences of character, some people behaving more admirably than others. But the radical reduction in the possibility of action, the extremity of suffering, the lack of time for reflection, the continuous state of emergency: all these must produce in people who view the events from the comfort of ordinary life pity rather than judgment. When Levi speaks of rigor he means, I believe, a rigor that works against facile condemnations of the "sins" or "crimes" of the victims. Such rigor should serve the most important distinction of all: that between tormentor and victim. The peril to be avoided at all cost is that understanding the powerful determinism that defined the camps will lead us to excuse the behavior of those who ran them. They exist irredeemably beyond the gray zone. In his heroic effort to understand and not simply judge, suggests Tzvetan Todorov, Levi did not entirely avoid the peril. Understanding the tormentor, Todorov argues with compassion for Levi, may not be the task of the survivor.[8]

I don't mean to diminish the penetration and complexity of Améry's moral intelligence. But his imagination is powerfully shaped and determined by the experience of extremity as Levi's is not. I must be careful to qualify this distinction. Levi's work is, of course, pervasively influenced by the Holocaust, but his temperament does not have the same susceptibility to extremity. If Améry is the man of reason, Levi is the reasonable man. He himself summed it up beautifully in speaking of Améry's suicide:

> It was not commented on, it was not "comforted by tears." In the face of death, in the habit of death, the frontier between culture and lack of culture disappeared. Améry states that one no longer thought about *whether* one would die, an accepted fact, but rather about *how*: "There were discussions about the time necessary for the poison in the gas chambers to take effect. There were speculations about the painfulness of death by phenol injection. Should one hope for a blow on the skull or death by exhaustion in the infirmary?"
>
> On this point my experience and my recollections diverge from Améry's. Perhaps because I was younger, perhaps because I was more ignorant than he, or less marked, or less conscious, I almost never had time to devote to death. I had many other things to keep me busy—finding a bit of bread, avoiding exhausting work, patching my shoes, stealing a broom, or interpreting the signs and faces around me. The aims of life are the best defense against death: and not only in the *Läger* [camps].

For this reason, Levi's own death (we are no longer sure it was suicide) remains shrouded in mystery.

My reading of *The Drowned and The Saved* is at odds with Cynthia Ozick's interpretation of the book as a "suicide note." She makes a metaphor of the trading of blows in characterizing the book as "one of the blows returned by a pen of fire." No longer the objective writer who cultivates "magisterial equanimity, unaroused detachment,"[9] Levi now releases his

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pent-up rage against his tormentors and writes "the bitterest of suicide notes." This reading of Levi seems to me misconceived, especially surprising coming from so acute a reader as Ozick. It is in *The Drowned and The Saved* that Levi rebukes, if that is the right word, Améry's self-destructive retaliatory impulses as the sign of someone preoccupied with death and remarks in contrast his own devotion to the aims of life. Levi had always managed to combine equanimity with a moral lucidity that knew when to judge and with what degree of severity and when to suspend judgment. *The Drowned and The Saved* exhibits these qualities throughout; if there are "lapses," as in his anger toward apparently well-meaning Germans who write to explain themselves to him, they seem hardly to justify the notion that Levi is announcing his suicide. But even if it is true that he shows an aggressiveness in the book not to be found in his previous work, the identification of that aggressiveness with the literal trading of blows in Améry confuses fact with metaphor. To trade blows in the camps is to invite death. To deliver blows in a book against a defeated but still dangerous enemy may be an affirmative, even life-affirming act. Ozick would not have arrived at her conclusions about *The Drowned and The Saved* **before** the fact of Levi's "suicide." There is a kind of irresponsible reading of a text that invents from a merely literary interpretation a history that requires evidence of another sort. (Leslie Fiedler's ascertaining of the guilt of the Rosenbergs from their letters to one another strikes me as another such example.) In Ozick's case, the irresponsibility is compounded by the fact that we are not sure that Levi committed suicide (hence the quotation marks above) or, if he did, we do not know and should not presume to know what the reasons were, since there was no suicide note.

Suicide is the negation of survival. We may be missing the lesson of the Läger by allowing the ethic of survival to provide the focus for discussion. To suggest that the mere capacity for survival reflects *moral* integrity is to insult the countless admirable people who perished in the Holocaust. The lesson of the camps has to do with the nature of human beings when they are forced to live in the conditions created by the camps. For Levi, the answer is *not* that man is "fundamentally brutal, egoistic and stupid in his conduct once every civilized institution is taken away, and that the prisoner is consequently nothing but a man without inhibitions." Such a view allows what Levi sardonically calls the experiment to define the human condition; it erodes the distinction between victimizer and victim by accepting the view that the victim in his dehumanization is no better than the master race. Levi draws a different conclusion in *Survival*: "that in the face of driving necessity and physical disabilities many social habits and instincts are reduced to silence." Social habits and instincts constitute the essence of our humanity. The camps had as their aim the destruction of that essence, and it achieved its aim to the extent that it persuaded people that man is fundamentally, or by nature, brutal.

It is for this reason that in *Survival* Levi is careful to note instances of persons who managed to preserve their integrity and decency, no matter how extreme conditions were:

> I believe that it was really due to Lorenzo that I am alive today; and not so much for his material aid as for his having constantly reminded me by his presence, by his natural and plain manner of being good, that there still existed a just world outside our own, something and someone still pure and whole, not corrupt, not savage, extraneous to hatred and terror, something difficult to define, a remote possibility of good, but for which it was worth surviving.

The testimony of Levi and others should caution us against the perniciousness of recent efforts to deconstruct and demystify "the human" in the putative interest of truth. Such efforts reflect the extremity against which Levi posed an exemplary humanism. Levi also reminds us of the limits of humanism. Moral reason or the cultural tradition is too weak a resource in extreme situations. It does not provide the sense of solidarity that one discovers among believers and ideologues. Contemporary critics of the Enlightenment have focused on the poverty of the communal imagination of Enlightenment thought, though

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in theory the Enlightenment promises fraternity. The site of enlightened reason is the individual person whose sense of community with others may be abstract. In contrast, a confirmed communist like Levi's barber "never despaired," because "Stalin was his fortress, the Rock sung in the psalms." The communal imperative can, of course, become a tyranny. Utopian constructions when realized may turn out to be communities of terror. All "solutions" proposed by the moral intelligence to the abiding threat of extremity remain provisional and precarious, requiring an anxious vigilance. But the obvious "inadequacy" of the solutions may be the only alternative to the intolerable "demystification" of our humanity by the Holocaust. □

Notes

[1] George Steiner, *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature, and the Inhuman* (New York: Athenaeum, 1967), p. 168.

[2] Primo Levi, *The Drowned and The Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), p. 142. Unless otherwise noted, all references are to this book.

[3] Jean Améry, *At The Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and Its Realities*, trans. Sidney Rosenfeld and Stella Rosenfeld. Forward by Alexander Stille (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), pp. 3–4. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent references are to this work.

[4] Jean Améry, *Radical Humanism*, ed. and trans. by Sidney Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 136.

[5] Quoted in Albert Camus, *The Rebel* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 15.

[6] See Terrence Des Pres, *The Survivor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 97.

[7] Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity*, trans. by Stuart Woolf (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1976), p. 102.

[8] See Tzvetan Todorov, *Face à l'extreme* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1991), pp. 294–297.

[9] Cynthia Ozick, *Metaphor and Memory* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), p. 47.

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THE EDITORS □

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George Packer

A DEMOCRACY OF GUNS AND SPIRITS

Ten years ago I taught English to the children of subsistence farmers in Togo, a tiny country on the west coast of Africa that I once thought I knew. But when I went back recently to a town seven miles from the village where I'd lived as a Peace Corps volunteer, I could no longer find my way around. The big outdoor market in the center of Kpalimé, the sprawl of tables and stalls where I used to come on Saturdays to buy pineapples and eggs and wave flies off my lunch and listen to the chatter of the girls pounding yams, was gone. The old military regime had declared it an eyesore and soldiers had razed it in 1989, on the eve of a presidential visit. The market was now a mud flat. But just across the street, the twenty-foot statue of President Gnassingbé Eyadema was gone too, pulled down in 1991 by townspeople. Some of them had been my students; a few were shot dead in the act. The emptiness of the great stone pedestal, now guarded by a twelve-year-old goalie at one end of a noisy soccer game, mocked the empty field across the street: arbitrary state power answered by the sudden power of the mob. Around the corner, a wall was covered with abusive graffiti. Someone had written: "Eyadema Has AIDS."

Ten years ago President Eyadema was sacred, and the insult would have been blasphemy. I asked a young man named Gregoire, a newly licensed taxi driver without a taxi, whether anyone had protested in 1989 when the market was destroyed. For a moment he smiled the pathetic fearful smile I remembered from my Peace Corps years under the dictatorship. "Oh, no, they would be thrown in jail!" And what if the soldiers had done it in 1990 or 1992? This thought also appalled Gregoire, but now he was outraged. "They couldn't! The people wouldn't let them!" Well—what was the difference? "In 1990," he told me, as if this had been the stupidest question of all, "democracy came."

Democracy had "come" to Togo, and to much of the rest of Africa—or so I'd heard. I went back because I couldn't quite believe it. Where did my teacher friends, Togo's supposed intellectuals who used to ask no questions and entertain no ideas, get the idea that they could go on strike? How did their students, who used to submit to beatings and year after year of failure, imagine they could follow suit? How could the bush-taxi drivers, who used to cringe as they paid extortion money to policemen, suddenly organize themselves into a union powerful enough to force the dictatorship to agree to a national conference? Where did the ordinary Togolese who spoke at that conference for six weeks in the summer of 1991—the doctors, the bureaucrats, above all the handful of soldiers—find enough courage to tell the truth about the Eyadema years and admit how dictatorship had implicated every one of them, and then enough wisdom to pardon and reconcile? What made the conference think that it could declare itself sovereign and name a transitional government leading to elections? All this in an impoverished African backwater that hadn't had a free election since 1958, when the Togolese voted for independence from France.

The popular revolt that began in 1990 has stripped away much of Eyadema's authority, but he is still president and still controls the army. The statue fell, but the dictator is unwilling to leave. At the beginning of this year, after countless scheduled elections were postponed or nullified by fraud, Togolese finally lined up and voted freely for a Parliament in which the opposition majority

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will try to coexist with President Eyadema. But it doesn't take long to learn that in Africa democracy means much more than elections. Even before them, Kpalimé, at the heart of the lush, mountainous coffee and cacao region in Togo's southwest, was already transformed: in the very town where the Togolese People's Assembly (RPT)—the single party of the Eyadema dictatorship—was born, civilian militias search vehicles for bombs that the president's men might bring into the stronghold of the new democratic opposition. The militiamen are crudely armed with machetes, bows and arrows, and ancient twelve-caliber hunting rifles. Some of them wear the white facial paint and thigh-length tunics of the much-feared *abrafo*—men with supernatural powers known for their skills at decapitation. One militiaman said that he'd undergone several days of ceremonial preparation that allowed him to work forty-eight hours without sleeping. On the way into town, a fellow passenger told me that these militiamen believed themselves invulnerable to the army's bullets. I asked him—an agricultural trainer—whether he believed it himself. He thought about it, and then he said, "Partly."

Democracy has come to Togo—partly. It depends on whom you ask and what the word means to the person, and the word sometimes seems to have as many meanings as there are Togolese. To Gregoire it isn't a political system but a mysterious force that appeared one day in 1990 and changed everything: people who had suffered in silence for over two decades suddenly refused to endure any more. Beyond that, there's no explaining it. Democratic power is something like fetish power, a matter of spirits and state of mind. When I asked Gregoire if he would shoot Eyadema given the chance, he echoed what other young men had told me: that anyone would botch the job unless he had intensive spiritual preparation, because the president has visited the strongest fetish priests—in India even. And so Eyadema is still alive, protected by guns and gri-gri, clinging to what remains of his power.

What is happening in Togo has been happening all over Africa—anglophone and francophone, Marxist and pro-Western, poor and destitute. Since 1989 the people of Benin, Cameroon, Mali, Kenya, Zambia, Zaire, Congo, and other countries have tried to get rid of regimes that replaced harsh colonial rule with often harsher African dictatorships. In a few cases fragile new governments have been elected; more often, the upheavals have led to anarchy and stalemate. Togo is trapped between the old and the new in a violent, seemingly endless transition. The country offers the spectacle of democracy at its birth, bloody, squalling, and miraculous.

Originally colonized by the Germans, handed over to the French after Versailles, Togo is one of Africa's crimes of European cartography—a resource-poor sliver of three-and-a-half million people wedged between Ghana and Benin. It's just 350 miles, less than the length of Florida, from the humid coastal capital Lomé up through the tropical southern highlands around Kpalimé, the flat teak forests of the central region near Sotouboua, the rocky hills of the president's home above Lama Kara, and the Keran game park of the dry northern savannah where the Sahara feels close. Togo's borders slice up villages but yoke together distant tribes that have no historical ties. The Ewé, in the south, are historically more educated; the Kabyé, farmers from the north, make up 80 percent of the armed forces.

After independence in 1960, three years of increasingly dictatorial rule under the first president, Sylvanus Olympio, an Ewé, ended in black Africa's first military coup d'état. The ringleader was a Kabyé sergeant named Eyadema. According to a legend that Eyadema does nothing to discourage, he himself fired the fatal shot.

For a quarter century Eyadema ruled through brute force and a personality cult he borrowed from various dictators and leaders, African and foreign. His friends and hunting partners included Ceaucescu, Mobutu, Giscard d'Estaing, François Mitterrand's son, Josef Strauss of Bavaria, and Kim Il Sung. In 1974, Eyadema's private jet crashed near his home village: the two French pilots were killed, but Eyadema emerged, godlike, from the wreckage un-

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scathed. The Togolese calendar acquired a handful of hallowed dates, the hotels in Lomé changed their names, and everywhere Eyadema appeared his praises were literally sung by groups of Togolese who danced and chanted on pain of death. He built himself a massive chateau on a hill above his village, with ostentatious domes and turrets and arches looming like a medieval fortress over the round mud huts and hardscrabble millet fields of Kabyé peasants. In one vast air-conditioned room he kept his elephants, lions, and tigers from a Canadian zoo. He shed his military uniform for a double-breasted suit, pomaded his hair, grew stout, and cultivated the image of a peace-loving African statesman. But he remained a soldier.

To the outside world Togo was "the Switzerland of Africa": West Africa's banking center, an attractive spot for tourists, "stable" and pro-Western. A lot of people, including a series of American ambassadors, allowed themselves to be fooled about the true nature of the regime. No one imagined Togo free, but if Idi Amin was mutilating his countrymen, and Angola was tearing itself to pieces, and Ethiopians were dying by the thousands, it became easier to think that life in Togo was at least tolerable. The Togolese I knew when I was a teacher seemed compliant, cheerful when it was called for, most often indifferent. Political affairs were none of their business; it didn't seem to occur to them that it could be otherwise. My conversations with colleagues in the long hot afternoons felt dull, drained of mental vigor by the gaping hole in available subject matter and by their own willful lack of interest—but not particularly terror-stricken. No one talked about torture chambers, about suspected opponents thrown out of helicopters. "Dictatorship," said a Frenchman of long experience in the country, "makes everyone stupid and mean."

The end of the cold war and the upheaval in Eastern Europe—in francophone Africa it's called *le vent de l'Est*—gave the Togolese not just a model but an opportunity. Suddenly all the external powers who controlled desperate Africa's fate were changing. In 1989 the Beninois were the first to revolt: the "Marxist" regime there, economically devastated and ideologically empty, followed its European counterparts and disintegrated like rotten timber, with very little loss of life. The wind from the East blew across Togo's border. In the same year the World Bank began linking its Africa loans to political as well as economic liberalization, and at the 1990 Franco-African summit French President Mitterrand declared for the first time that French aid would be conditioned on democracy and human rights. Around the same time the Eyadema regime was establishing with much fanfare a free trade zone at the Lomé port. For years Togo had been ground down under debt, IMF-imposed austerity, entrenched corruption, and disastrous falls in world commodity prices. Economic discontent had become a serious internal threat. Like most of Africa, Togo was trying to sell off state enterprises and lure foreign investors to set up low-wage, tax-free factories. No one was crying exploitation; Africa's options had been reduced to a cry of "Exploit us!"

The Eyadema regime began to insist that it had always intended to liberalize—that, in fact, it *had* been liberalizing for quite some time, at a pace suited to the country's immaturity. But when Vigniko Amedegnato, the RPT's fleshy, buoyant, chain-smoking general secretary, explained the regime's economic policy to me, he didn't even pretend to believe in democratic ideals. "Foreigners don't have the same mentality as us," he rasped. "For them to be able to adapt to our country, the country has to adapt a little to their mentality. At the time we were appealing above all to the Americans. When the Americans are in your home you have to show them at least a little democracy! That had an immediate impact on our politics—better modify our politics so that these people didn't feel they were in a bizarre country." In other words, democratization served roughly the same purpose as putting pizza on the menu in hotels. It wasn't what the locals ate, but the fate of the locals was no longer in their own hands, and they would have to learn to serve up foreign fare.

So the planets had suddenly aligned them-

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selves in such a way that a Togolese publisher named Gabriel Agah could start a newspaper named *Weekly Forum* that issued mild criticisms of the regime, and could count on an international reaction when the regime that was busy presenting a democratic face to foreign investors tried to suppress it. There was, Agah said, "a little opening," and he and other educated Togolese rushed through. Students were arrested for passing out tracts, and when guilty verdicts were announced the new opposition used this as a test case. On October 5, 1990 six thousand people demonstrated at the Palace of Justice; they were fired on and as many as seventeen died. The students were soon released, but it was too late. The locals had acquired a taste for the foreign import they called democracy, and events spun out of the regime's control.

Eyadema has responded as he knows how: since the upheaval began his army has shot opposition leaders, blown up houses, smashed the computers that held voting lists, burned truckloads of ballots. In turn, there have been reports of opposition militias armed and trained in Ghana. The French, Eyadema's longtime backers, have refused to intervene, and a wave of anti-French feeling has swept through Togo, causing much of the French community to flee. One morning during my visit the news of a young opposition leader's murder brought angry crowds into the streets. They uprooted trees to block the main roads, and at a barricade a young man with rocks in his hands demanded my passport as proof I wasn't French. "We don't need whites here any more," one man shouted at me. "You're American?" another asked. "Why don't your Marines come in and get rid of Eyadema?"

For several years Togo has been walking the edge of civil war. "I don't want to overdramatize," a Togolese U.N. official said. "But Liberia is there. Somalia is there."

"Freedom is inevitable," Crispin Leguedé, the human resources director of Shell Oil in Togo, told me. He is a mild, earnest, busy man in a dark suit; his office over a filling station has a nice view of the beach behind Lomé's teeming *grand marché*. "There has already been an enormous change in mentality. After twenty, twenty-five years of repression, the people couldn't stand it any more." Leguedé has started a civic education group that he runs out of his office. The group holds public meetings up and down Togo to inform the citizenry—especially the vast illiterate majority—about elections, the new constitution, and the distinction between freedom and total license. "It's very hard to tell a peasant that now that we have democracy you must pay taxes you avoided for twenty-five years. He says: 'That's not democracy! That's dictatorship!' You have to explain to this *monsieur* that in a democratic state you'll know how much the state produces, how much it spends for you, for your village."

More than just a right, democracy carries the talismanic prestige of Western countries. It smells like success. When I met my old teaching colleagues again, I found people whose personalities had been transformed—they were informed and eager to argue politics. Togo's democratic revolution is first of all a professional revolution, led by civil servants, bankers, journalists. Crispin Leguedé has already tasted its benefits; his life is already new.

There are also skeptics. Esso-na Tchindé, the outgoing general secretary of the largest trade-union council, and an Eyadema appointee, told me with an illusion-piercing smile: "So far democracy concerns 5 percent, 2 percent, 3 percent of the population." Léopold Gninivi, a leader of the opposition, told me something similar: "The new constitution is for a third of the population, and for our dealings with the outside world. For the peasant on his farm, it touches him very little." An opposition leader from the north put it this way: "Intellectuals want a change of system; peasants want a change of person."

The distinction began to seem important: democracy, understood as the language of the new constitution (all 159 articles) and the thirty-odd political parties that have been recruiting entire villages without explaining their platforms, means nothing to the vast majority of Togolese. But freedom—"the

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guarantee," as Léopold Gninivi put it, "that a soldier isn't going to come and arrest them just like that, beat them, the authorities aren't going to order them in, someone isn't going to take away their wife"—freedom means something to a great many people in Togo. The old regime made sure of that.

But the farther I got from Lomé, on a trip that took me the length of the country through landscapes that had been physically transformed by social upheaval, the more complicated even freedom came to seem. For some Togolese it has brought a liberation of the spirit, for others dangerous hope, for others calamity, and for others still it has made no difference at all.

Not far from Kpalimé, at the foot of a lush green plateau half-hidden by fog, there is a tiny village of mud dwellings called Woumé. Here I had made arrangements to meet two young men—one an Ewé, the other a Kabyé—who twice a day used to make the five-mile round-trip walk from Woumé to share a wooden desk in my seventh-grade English class. They were waiting for me on the rain-ruined paved road that cuts through the village, each clutching a vinyl sack that contained the only change of good clothes he owned. Ten years had passed, but they looked very much the same. The Ewé, Kodjo, who was stocky and pigeon-toed, grinned at me as if after a decade we were still in cahoots about something slightly scandalous. A southerner, he'd spent all his life in Woumé, where his stingy, inebriate father was the acting village chief. Kpatcha was taller, gap-toothed, very handsome, more serious, less articulate but a better student. He was the son of Kabyé sharecroppers from the north and had grown up on a farm a mile into the bush outside of Woumé. Both his parents were dead, so Kpatcha, in his early twenties, now lived alone in Kpalimé, where he could not seem to get out of high school. The day we began our trip he learned that he'd failed the baccalaureate exam for the third time. Kodjo, the same age, was even worse off: it had taken him eleven years to get through the four grades of junior high, and he was about to repeat his first year of high school. Their failure is not only typical but necessary in a country that has no jobs for the survivors of its French-colonial school system. Only their perseverance was unusual. And as we set out, I sensed that for both of them this trip around a country they hardly knew represented a turning point. Neither wanted to return to the same life.

Woumé itself was a changed place. Along the road where Kodjo and Kpatcha stood there were now electric streetlights. According to Kodjo, a villager had learned from a friend in one of the government ministries that the hydroelectric dam nearby entitled Woumé to free electrical power. For thirty years no one had known and no one had asked. But with their new freedom villagers were emboldened to block the dirt access road to the plant and keep state electrical workers from entering until the government agreed to run power lines through the village. So now Woumé was lit up at night, though only one villager could afford the $200 fee to bring power to his home.

Farther up along the road from Kpalimé, villagers in Tsikpo had leveled a field of palm trees and set up a dozen thatch distilleries, like a small herd of shaggy bison, for the firing of palm wine into a brutal liquor that used to be called *sodabi*. Its manufacture had previously been widespread but illegal: farmers hid their stills off in the bush and market women called out "Kerosene!" to announce *sodabi* for sale. But when, at the start of the popular revolt, an opposition leader named Agboyibor demanded to know why people in the president's home region up north could drink fermented millet while southerners were forbidden to drink distilled palm wine, no reply came back, and Togolese all over the south took it as a sign that with democracy this too was now permitted. So the people of Tsikpo began production of the drink they've renamed Agboyibor.

For twenty-five years cutting down trees was harshly forbidden—a reforestation policy that the dictatorship never bothered to explain but enforced through stiff fines and jail terms. Now Togolese are cutting down trees all over the country. In the flat, sparsely populated central region, with its great teak forests, enormous

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mounds of wood were for sale all along the highway and the forests had become fields of stumps. Women who used to have to walk far into the bush for firewood now could find it in any village, cheap. Kpatcha told me that the Muslims of the region believe trees are inhabited by the president's soul; and I thought of the fallen statue in Kpalimé.

Much farther north, in the dry grasses of the game parks, poachers had wiped out most of the larger animals, and the meat of antelope or wild boar now sold openly in village markets. The old regime took the preservation of wildlife even more seriously than reforestation, and Amnesty International has reported peasants being executed for fishing in game parks. The president alone had been permitted to hunt; now the president's countrymen were making up for lost time. In the Keran reserve the poaching amounted to a massacre. Trees that used to be alive with baboons stood motionless in the heat, and the week before two elephants had been gunned down. Instead of forest police, peasants now manned the entrance barriers and swarmed around my car for money. Forcibly evicted in the regime's expansion of Keran, they had returned to rebuild their houses and plant fields in the game park.

In the middle of Togo, a clay road leaves the national highway westward and recedes into the green hills of the Fazao reserve. Twenty miles down the road, in a village on the edge of the reserve, I came upon a group of women sitting under a tree weaving straw baskets and mats. They were Muslim Kotokoli, refugees from the town of Sotouboua. A few months before, an ancient land dispute with the Kabyé, the president's tribe, had erupted into a brief but bloody war, and the Kotokoli had got much the worst of it. Twenty-five of them were killed, some burned alive. Several thousand Kotokoli fled three days through the bush to Fazao. An old woman showed me two charred sewing machines she'd carried—"As proof." When I asked another woman what had happened on the day of the battle she answered, "You have to back up, it started a long time ago." Then she told me a story that began during the period of German colonization and ended with her younger brother being hacked to death.

In the middle of the village, Kotokoli men were sitting idly under an enormous baobab. I asked them what they felt about the Kabyé—did they want revenge? Did they hate the Kabyé? A man of chiefly bearing in a knitted skull cap answered for the group. They hadn't the means to avenge themselves, he said with chagrin; and as for hatred, they didn't know the Kabyé, didn't know what motivated them, to hate them or not.

And what did democracy mean to these men now?

"That there will be no more injustice," he said. Throughout the Eyadema years they'd been unable to protest the Kabyé building houses on what the Kotokoli considered their land; now democracy had given them the right. I pointed out what this had led to—would they have been better off without democracy? He shook his head. "Even if we die for it, people will know we tried to claim what belonged to us."

In the town of Sotouboua, among the Kabyé who'd chased them out, I heard a different version of the conflict, and of democracy. "It means do whatever you want," said a young man who'd fought in the battle. "Steal, kill." His hands, chalk-white from milling flour, sliced the air with an imaginary machete. In the yard of the family compound his old grandmother vehemently pantomimed someone digging up her manioc field and stealing her crop. Before, they insisted, they and the Kotokoli had always gotten along fine.

"We know the dictionary says democracy means something else," a sad-eyed student explained. "But the Togolese have misunderstood it. Now we have freedom but no security."

I asked him if it wasn't possible to have both.

He looked baffled. "How?"

The problem wasn't entirely theoretical, for a hundred yards away an entire neighborhood lay in ruins, the grass roofs burned, the mud walls broken, the household goods of the Kotokoli still lying where they'd been scattered. In a place like this it wasn't hard to think that freedom is incompatible with security, that

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the choice is not between dictatorship and democracy but between order and chaos. I was certain that this was the way Eyadema wanted the country to see it. And yet the same young man who'd said democracy meant stealing and killing had been counted in the electoral census and was determined to vote. For him the word had been entirely stripped of its "dictionary" meaning. The right to vote wasn't the problem—democracy was.

Another young man, a farmer without schooling, admitted that he didn't know what the word meant. His confusion was understandable, for what his own people had done to the Kotokoli had happened to him not long before. He was one of the thousands of Kabyé peasants—some estimates put it at 80,000—who have been expelled from the south of Togo by the indigenous Ewé or else have left out of fear. Their sudden arrival in large numbers in Sotouboua, among other places, sparked the bloody battle over land. The young farmer agreed that the expelled Kotokoli were in about the same position he was in. Nonetheless, he hoped they wouldn't come back to Sotouboua, for he didn't want to be kicked off his land yet again.

Most of the Kabyé refugees are sharecroppers, like Kpatcha's parents, who farmed in the south for decades. Under the Eyadema regime, magistrates and policemen, usually Kabyé, resolved disputes that arose with Ewé landlords in the sharecroppers' favor. Nearly every Ewé had an old grievance, and now nearly every Kabyé has a sad story. My efforts to find out why people were killed on a given day got the same reply all over Togo: "You have to back up, it started long ago. . . ." Whom you sympathized with depended on how far you were ready to back up. Few people were willing to accept the impossibility of settling all scores and achieving complete justice. And so they are continuing to kill each other.

The atmosphere was different in the northern town of Lama Kara, amid the hot barren hills just south of Eyadema's chateau. The president's stronghold seemed hardly to have changed at all. The walls were free of grafitti and the streets so safe that many whites had moved here. Soldiers, not militiamen, guarded the checkpoints. There was much more of the bowing, saluting self-abasement before superiors that had been so common ten years ago and seemed to have disappeared from the rest of Togo. In Kara, Eyadema was still called boss, and so was I.

At a policemen's track meet, I met the boss's handpicked provincial governor, N'Djalawé Bakaoul, who was busy marking down the late and the absent on an attendance list. N'Djalawé Bakaoul acknowledged me with the frostiest of greetings, and I had a shiver of déjà vu from the time when people who had any authority made sure you knew it while they pursued menial disciplinary tasks. "Everyone is a democrat," the governor assured me. "But we have to follow the right path. They say my province is impenetrable. It's false. We know the opposition is here—we know their names, but we don't do anything to them. We gave them permits to demonstrate. Why don't they show themselves? Because they reproach themselves for what their parties have done to the Kabyé in other provinces."

At the end of the trip, back in Lomé, I ran into a couple I'd met up north. There they had been polite, reserved, neutral; now, when I described the governor's picture of harmony and calm in Kara, they answered me with open bitterness. They were in Lomé to find a house to rent: suspected as anti-Eyadema, they'd had to abandon Kara after receiving death threats that followed months of harassment. "It's the *appearance* of calm there," the woman said. "But under the surface. . . ."

"It's enough to be suspected," her husband added, "and they kill."

The capital, too, as if to ape the country, has split north and south. The old neighborhoods near the coast are solidly for the opposition, and it is unsafe for anyone in uniform to walk there. ("We are detested," one Kabyé soldier said bitterly.) Lomé's Kabyé have clustered in a couple of neighborhoods in the north of the city, near the quiet suburb where the president and his former ministers live in state-funded villas alongside French military advisers. I met plenty of Kabyé and Ewé who had been forced

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out of one neighborhood or another. I found them alike mainly in the intensity of their rancor.

"We have to eliminate the race," a young man announced one morning at the stand where I had my coffee. The race in question was the Kabyé, and he was far from the only southerner I met who advocated this solution. An elegant French-educated young woman extended her verdict beyond the Kabyé: "Crush them, the whole north, and we'll be finished." Opposition editorial cartoons depict Eyadema as a bloodthirsty savage in a loincloth. The contempt of southerners is only deepened by their awareness that they allowed these Kabyé "animals" to run their lives for twenty-five years at gunpoint.

One Sunday morning, Kpatcha and I went to Adewui, Lomé's new Kabyé ghetto, where we ran into a Kabyé schoolteacher named Batchassi, whom Kpatcha had known in Kpalimé. A heavy man in a fishnet undershirt, he was all too willing to tell me how his house in Kpalimé had been burned and he'd been forced to flee to Lomé because his Ewé neighbors decided his new motorcycle was a gift from Eyadema's RPT. "I tell you," Batchassi declared, "in two years there will be a famine in Togo because of the expulsions of Kabyé from the south. The fields are ruined and the Ewé are too lazy to farm them."

Before long, eight or ten neighborhood men had joined us in the street. A Kabyé law student described the southern friends who had stopped speaking to him; a Kabyé policeman recounted the night he'd had to plead for his life with an Ewé mob that held a knife to his throat. All of them insisted that until its tribalist character came out they'd welcomed democratization. "We suffered most under the dictatorship," said the law student. "We were the least free." But in dangerous times they saw no choice but to stick with their tribal brothers and turn back to Eyadema as their only defense.

"Before, perhaps it was a democratic struggle," the law student told me, "but now it's become a pure struggle for power."

Tchedeli Amah, Kpatcha's great-uncle, lives in a shabby iron-roofed compound on the edge of Adewui. He is a retired soldier who has spent his life in the long shadow of the president he reveres, and he told me the story of that life under his mango tree, chewing on a blade of grass, his straw fedora cocked at a jaunty angle. A Kabyé from Eyadema's home village, Amah had volunteered to drive the rebel soldiers' vehicle on the night of Sergeant Eyadema's 1963 coup; but when the moment to attack came he was forgotten and missed out. A lifelong pattern was set. Unschooled, Amah languished for years as a private while other coup members received promotions, but he couldn't bring himself to speak to the *patron* until the day, years later, when Amah drove the refrigerated truck carrying Eyadema's hunting spoils from the Keran reserve to Lomé. The president promoted him on the spot. "He said I'd been tricked," Amah told me. "Anyone driving a truck for the president should be at least a corporal-major."

When the time came for Amah to retire—he had reached the rank of sergeant—Eyadema took him on as a personal driver, and for the past decade Amah had been driving Eyadema's children to school and also, rumor had it, ferrying fetish priests to the president's palace. He wasn't paid a monthly salary: instead, he'd get lump sums of $500 or $1,000 and then, once again, be forgotten for months or years at a time. He still couldn't bring himself to complain, either to Eyadema or to me. "Without him," the retired soldier said, "I am nothing."

The upheaval that liberated educated southerners like Crispin Leguedé, the Shell Oil executive and civic leader, has brought Tchedeli Amah's world crashing down. His solution is "to go backward": he wants his *patron* in power forever. When I asked about the murder of opposition leaders, Amah spat out the blade of grass. "It doesn't concern me if the Ewé are killed."

Though he was a Kabyé born in the south, Kpatcha could pass for an Ewé and was now going by a new, Ewé name. At the start of the upheaval, when the country seemed on the verge of tribal war, he wrote me:

> The problem is going against Kabyé because the dictator president is Kabyé and some Ewé say that

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> they have to kill all Kabyé. But they forget that Kabyé have nothing from him. I have no possibility to run away to Kara. I have only to do what I can to preserve my life among Ewé. I don't know why I come in this world. I have suffer to be happy in the future but the future is going more and more difficult for me. I have planted mangoes tree and palm tree last year for the future, but because of the actual political situation the owner of the soil has confiscated this field.

That year Kpatcha failed his baccalaureate exam for the second time. He suspected tribal favoritism in the results; yet he still saw his future in education. He considered democracy, though it had threatened his safety and belittled his tribe, as the guarantor of his right to succeed. In school, he told me, he had read Voltaire and Rousseau.

Kodjo could pass for nothing but an Ewé, which was fine with him. Timorous where Kpatcha was determined, wry where Kpatcha was earnest, he believed in the politics of the low profile. Kpatcha had helped conduct the electoral census in Kodjo's village; Kodjo made sure he was in his corn field the day his friend went house to house. Now his great fear was that, since peasants were turning to younger, more educated leaders, his fellow villagers might make him their new chief. However bad the dictatorship had been, at least it gave him a sense of stability. Yet during the worst period of anti-government and anti-Kabyé violence in Kpalimé, when Kpatcha couldn't leave his room for three days, Kodjo brought him food. "He is my brother," Kodjo told me. "How could I leave him alone?" Kpatcha reciprocated when Kodjo came to Lomé looking for work: Kpatcha risked his relatives' anger by lodging Kodjo in their cramped quarters in Adewui.

Ethnic hatred is the profoundest legacy of dictatorship and the most daunting problem for democracy. I often heard of Ewé and Kabyé who no longer spoke to each other, of mixed marriages that had fallen apart; I heard people wishing the death of former friends. Before going into a village where massacres or expulsions had taken place, Kodjo, Kpatcha, and I would calculate which of them should wait in the car; in some places they took turns. When we were all together, it was never long before their tribal affiliations were asked. And as I traveled with them through half-deserted villages where longtime neighbors had recently killed each other, the endurance of this friendship between opposites began to seem more and more an achievement. At times I clung to it as a sign of sanity and a rare cause for hope.

Yet there were some truths the friendship couldn't contain. Kodjo insisted that no expulsions of Kabyé had taken place in his village. But Kpatcha took me down a path to the farm hut of a Kabyé sharecropper's widow who had been chased away with her four children. Her thatch kitchen was burned, her mud house broken; even her little clay stove had been crushed. Nearby, her palm and cacao trees lay uprooted. What was more, Kpatcha told me that his own field had been partly ransacked and claimed as the property of a southern villager—Kodjo's father. He suspected that Kodjo knew this but was too ashamed to admit it. Up in Kara, when Kodjo assured Kpatcha's sisters that his village was a model of good Ewé-Kabyé relations, Kpatcha spared his friend's feelings and remained silent.

Our trip changed Kpatcha, without changing anything in his life. His own country had opened before him and what he saw moved and angered him. With each encounter his confidence as interpreter and guide rose, until he began to play the role of both Ewé and Kabyé, delighting in his ability to work both sides of the ethnic divide. For him, democracy meant you could write a letter of complaint to the president, and he seemed better cut out than Kodjo for the whirlwind of danger and opportunity that change has visited on Togo.

Kodjo, feeling less and less useful, spent more time waiting in the car. At the end of our trip, in Lomé, he seemed lost, as if he were expecting good fortune to smile on his charm. Then, abruptly, he declared that he was ready to give up the schoolboy's dream of an office job and look for an apprenticeship in a hotel. The problem was that the birth of democracy had killed tourism: the hotels were empty, the street vendors of batiks and postcards clung to

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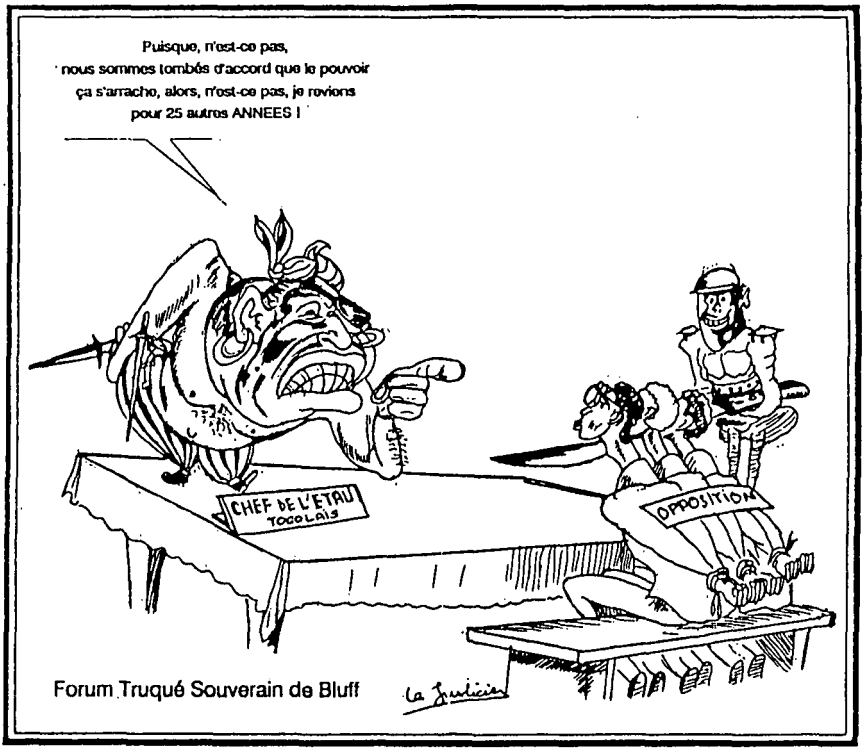
Puisque, n'est-ce pas,
nous sommes tombés d'accord que le pouvoir
ça s'arrache, alors, n'est-ce pas, je reviens
pour 25 autres ANNEES !
CHEF DE L'ETAT TOGOLAIS
OPPOSITION
Forum Truqué Souverain de Bluff

"Since we all agree that power is now up for grabs, I'm coming back for another twenty-five years."

the few remaining whites with desperate tenacity. One afternoon, I accompanied Kodjo on a job interview. We spent two hours waiting for a hotel owner to wake up from his nap, while his ten-year-old mulatto daughter ordered the staff around by poolside. Kodjo passed the time by perfecting an imitation of her snotty, precious French. Upon awakening, the hotelier was too busy to see us. As we waited on an empty stretch of highway for a bus to take Kodjo back to his village, he began to weep. "You trouble yourself too much for me."

The American ambassador in Lomé told me that in the long term democracy, Africa's new mantra, will go hand in hand with development, its old one. In the short term the Togolese keep getting poorer, and the violent transition has made things much worse, sorely testing the faith of the new believers. Since democracy until now has been realized mainly in perception and expression, the taxi-less taxi driver Gregoire's vision of a sudden, inexplicable change in spirit, an infusion of courage and freedom and power where there had been none, remains perhaps the truest account I heard. For the twenty-five-year-old who stays in high school because there's no work, the college graduate who smuggles toilet seats from Ghana to make ends meet, the refugee waiting for justice to reach his new village, the driver without a vehicle—for them the idea that democracy will bring development is so far just a hope, or an illusion. For them democracy has changed nothing essential yet, except their minds.

In the end, Kodjo found work as an apprentice cook in the little Lomé hotel where I had rented a room. Kpatcha finally quit high school and came to Lomé as well, to live with his relatives in Adewui and enroll in a computer programming course. Three months later Kodjo was back at his hated father's mud house in Woumé; but Kpatcha stayed on in the capital. While the economy collapsed and a tenuous Parliament was elected and the president's soldiers continued to shoot their countrymen, he was learning a trade that he hoped would one day give him a job. □

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Irving Howe

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David Plotke

TWO LOGICS OF HEALTH CARE

Recent articles in *Dissent* on health care (Winter 1994 and Spring 1994) have been valuable but add up to less than might be hoped. Not so long ago it was often true that one could predict the left's position on just about anything: the more state/public control, the better; and the closer to total equality, the better. Through long controversies and even more due to the massive force of political events, most currents on the left turned both claims into questions. The resulting inquiries have been appearing in the 1990s in broad discussions about relations between public authority and markets, the complexity of equality, the importance of taking account of distinctive features of different social goods, and so forth.

Faced with a debate as sprawling and critical as that underway about health care, however, the subtlety of these discussions seems to have been put aside in favor of familiar positions: the more public authority over health care, the better; and the more fully equal provision, the better. Thus debate on the left seems to presume that a single-payer system is the best way to organize health care, leaving for argument only whether some form of managed competition is an acceptable compromise on the way to that solution.

I suspect that this backsliding occurs for two reasons. The better reason: familiar left positions provide a framework for insisting that whatever changes are made in health care, priority should be given to providing decent medical care to the large number of Americans who lack it. The bad reason: it is reassuring to combine such a powerful claim with conventional left formulas about maximizing public control.

1. *What is health care about?* The main discussions of health care reform (especially but not only) on the left proceed as though health care were a relatively fixed and simple good—the problem is how to distribute this good fairly. There are forms of health care for which this might be a good model—perhaps immunization and routine pediatric care. But it doesn't get at what people mean by health and why they care about it so much.

If we spelled out a basic list of health care services, would we presume that anyone who has received them is healthy? Is health the absence of illness or of immediate medical problems? As the answer to both questions is no, the following statements make sense: today I have a cold, but I am pretty healthy; or, there's nothing really wrong with me, but I don't feel healthy.

Such statements make sense because we regard health as a developmental process. Rather than marking a fixed condition, health refers to a range of complex activities and goods, and relations among them. Putting it simply—probably too simply—to be healthy means to be able today and to expect to be able tomorrow to make full use of one's physical and mental abilities. Health refers both to our present condition and our expectations. What it means to be healthy changes during any individual's life: as a function of prior efforts and experiences, as a function of what is socially understood as a normal life, and as a function of physical capacities.

2. *The double logic of health care.* The services and goods that a health care system provides are meant to enhance health—a dynamic aim, given the nature of that good. Americans expect the quality of health care to

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improve steadily over time. And by quality they mean both the direct effects of the services provided and the form of their provision.

These expectations are criticized and sometimes ridiculed by economists and policy makers concerned about mounting costs; the left sounds similar themes, perhaps believing that the only way to get funds to expand coverage is by discouraging expensive procedures as excessive and even selfish. Concern about health costs is legitimate, especially when people cannot afford to buy what they reasonably believe they need. But when one hears economists complaining about health care costs—orthodox neoclassical economists committed to the idea that the right amount of GNP to spend on x is whatever sum results from individuals' choices—one wonders. Do they really know how this money could be better spent? Or are these complaints another front in the long war against excessive popular expectations and entitlements? There is not much evidence that people expect to live forever; instead, they want to live long, healthy lives, and want their prospects (and the prospects of others, especially relatives and friends) to improve over time.

There is a double logic in the health care system. Health care is a basic element of membership in a political community or of equal opportunity in social and economic relations. Health care is also a bundle of social technologies that we want to develop, often as rapidly as possible (for example, in finding cures for fatal diseases).

The left is on solid ground in insisting that health care should be available to everyone. Moreover, the state is a reasonable instrument for making sure of that distribution (which is not necessarily the same thing as directly organizing it). In this first logic of health care, our primary concern is for inclusiveness, irrespective of the condition of those in need. Perhaps because the left is unused to having a real chance of winning on a major public issue, the temptation to stop the discussion here seems strong. At least that is how it seems from most of what has been written, not only in *Dissent* but generally in liberal and left publications.

3. *Health care as an advanced industry.* If health care is a basic element of what it means to live a decent life in the United States, it is also a large and growing industry. Its capacity for development is based on technical and social innovation. We want this development to occur because the result can help more people to live long and well.

This second logic of health care is more like that of other advanced industries: lines between goods and services are blurred, scientific and technical innovation is both an input and a product, and organizational flexibility and creativity are rewarded. Not many on the left would now say that such industries are best run by the state or that innovations in such industries should be discouraged when their immediate results are not egalitarian. Nor would many doubt that market elements should play a considerable role in setting prices and encouraging technical and organizational change.

Yet the current discussion doesn't pay much attention to this second logic of health care as a dynamic industry producing an expanding stream of rapidly changing goods. Nor does it take seriously the last twenty years of debate about markets and planning. Thus, in Rashi Fein's conception ("The Politics of Health Reform," *Dissent* Winter 1994), we can talk about running 10 percent to 15 percent of the American economy through collective decisions about allocation, with a predetermined budget. Such positions make easy targets for forces on the right who insist that any commitment to universal coverage is logically a commitment to stringent government control.

4. *The trap of a distributive politics.* It is crucial to assert a right to health care. But the left talks almost exclusively about *distributing* care. Politically, this road promises once again to stigmatize the left as statist, rigidly egalitarian, and hostile to innovation.

This would be an ironic outcome, because health care is an area where the political and intellectual right is on weak ground. To stress individual choice in health care is a position with wide appeal, yet one able to provide only limited advantage. The main contending plans for reform in 1994 would not reduce the range

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of choices that most people have, and it is evident that a large part of the population doesn't yet have the choice of any decent medical care. Moreover, the health care industry is not one that the American right can easily use to illustrate the virtues of pure markets. Extensive regulation and large public roles in funding research and development and influencing investment choices are closely linked to its achievements as well as its problems. In fact, the health care system exemplifies the industrial policies that opponents of industrial policy claim cannot work.

The health care problem is about how to distribute health care *and* how to produce health care in response to old and new problems. We need both distributive fairness and rapid development, and that double need, given the two logics of health care, is a source of recurrent conflict. Thus, market-linked growth usually includes elements that reasonably offend democratic sensibilities—big profits for drug companies, high salaries for medical specialists, and so on. The beneficiaries always claim their gain is essential to overall social welfare. Sorting out when such claims are right and when they are fraudulent requires political argument and economic analysis, neither of which gains from populist complaints about profits and salaries.

The logic of meeting basic needs and the logic of growth in a powerful service industry don't mesh easily. But both logics register widely held aspirations: more people should get more and better health care. I happily add the following to the manv lists of good things that health are reform should try to do: expand "basic" coverage to include everyone; improve quality; encourage technical and scientific advances; and encourage organizational innovation and diversity

These aims are often in tension, and every point of tension is a point of political argument. Clinton's principles (security, simplicity, savings, quality, choice, and responsibility), each one is certain to result in sharp conflicts with at least one other (for example, security and choice; savings and quality). But these conflicts cannot even be understood, much less partially resolved, if we retain state control and equality pure and simple as the basic criteria for evaluating proposals about how to reform the health care system.

Rashi Fein Replies

Few Americans, of whatever political persuasion, would disagree with David Plotke's four "good things that health care reform should try to do." My own list of the aims of health financing reform (as distinguished from delivery system reform) includes those and more. (See my "National Health Insurance: Telling the Good from the Bad," *Dissent*, Spring 1992). Among the "more" are goals that have been—and, I trust, remain—embedded in the aspirations of the "left." In that sense, rather than in the senses outlined in Plotke's first paragraph, we on the left remain predictable. We believe in a system that finances the "basic" coverage that Plotke refers to—our definition of "basic" is probably broader, deeper, and more comprehensive than his—in a progressive and equitable manner. We also believe in a system that enables patients and prospective patients (in today's vernacular, "consumers") to influence how much money is allocated to the medical sector and, thus, how much is available to meet other societal needs.

It is incorrect to state that the left "presumes that a single-payer system is the best way to organize health care." Those of us who believe that the United States should adopt a program of universal *insurance* (and many on the left reject that, preferring a British-style national health *service*), have *concluded*—not "*presumed*"—that a system financed through a broad-based general tax helps point in the direction of progressivity and equity. That system has come to be known as "single

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payer." None of us need apologize for *concluding*—after careful analysis—that it is a sensible way to finance universal insurance.

Nor should the left engage in a debate about whether managed competition (even if the "managed" part is emphasized and the "competition" part is pursued in moderation) "is an acceptable compromise on the way" to a single-payer system. Managed competition may be some sort of a compromise, but assuredly it is not a compromise *on the way to* a single-payer system. It calls for price competition among deliverers of care (increasingly organized into larger and larger units) and responses by knowledgeable and cost-conscious consumers in the marketplace to the array of prices associated with the different "products" of the various health care deliverers. Out of that would flow—so we are told—all sorts of benefits: improvements in quality, advances in effective delivery of care, and expenditure restraint. Whatever one might say about this theory, one thing seems clear: it is not a step "on the way" to a single-payer system, in no small measure because it has very little to do with such a system (and what implications it does have are at variance with the general tax-based approach).

I have noted the need to create a mechanism that permits us (indeed requires us) to decide how much we would spend on medical care. Presumably, but not necessarily, we would opt to restrain the explosive growth in expenditures. In managed competition, that restraint would be the sum of a set of behavioral decisions that we would make as individuals, sensitive to price *and influenced by the existing distribution of income*. In a single-payer system it would come out of a collective political decision. This is no trivial difference.

One's preference for a collective response is not a mere incantation of old ritualistic formulae. Many who support a single-payer system have wrestled with and continue to wrestle with the need to deal with the danger of underspending. We are aware of deteriorating roads, rusting bridges, declining educational quality. We know that Head Start appropriations fall below authorizations and that this is true for many social programs, even including those that President Clinton has termed "investments" and that he considers fundamental for our long-run economic growth. Plotke believes that like knee-jerk leftists we repeat "conventional left formulas about maximizing public control." Put simply: "Not true!"

My analytic conclusion that a single-payer mechanism can provide more of the things we seek with less dislocation than other systems has been reinforced by a political observation. It turns out that the administration's attempt to finesse the issue of taxes by opting for employer mandates has not made enactment of reform any easier. It is quite possible that the president will not attain the universality, community rating, and cost containment goals he seeks. If that happens, the best he will be able to say is that "we lost." Had he fought for a more equitable and less complicated program, he might have educated the American public to the real issues in taxation, finance, and delivery. Had that occurred he could have said, "We lost, but it will be easier next time."

That, too, is a posture the left may find useful: to recognize that our victories have not and will not come easily, but that they are more likely to come if we know what we believe and are willing to articulate our goals and beliefs. Plotke is quite correct in suggesting that we must address many issues, distinguish between medical care and health care, be sensitive to the need for continuing growth in our scientific knowledge base, encourage change in health care delivery arrangements and organizations, and understand the public's needs and desires. Agreed. The importance of the issues I have discussed and of the issues addressed in various articles in *Dissent* cannot be minimized. The left must remain concerned with distributional equity and progressive financing. Nevertheless, none of us who claim these are important matters would suggest they are the entire story. □

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Oliver Conant

ON TRASHING POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

Heterodoxy is a newish (since 1992) tabloid-sized monthly with an announced narrowness of focus: PC on campus. Its pages, festooned with exploding firecrackers and other crude line drawings, are full of virulent attacks on what it alternately sees as a concerted movement toward and as a realized regime of PC, particularly in humanities divisions of universities, but extending to American culture generally. It can be a useful source of news; the press has covered PC, but seldom in such uninhibited detail, with all the cant and pieties attributed and all the perpetrators named.

Heterodoxy is aimed at the young and, to a lesser extent, their professors, who, at least in the minds of its ex-radical editors, Peter Collier and David Horowitz (formerly the editors of *Ramparts*), might be counted on to overlook the occasional irruption of Reaganite sloganeering or mockery of homosexuals mixed in with the PC bashing. The sloganeering and mockery seem to be for the undergraduate crowd, who on some campuses need little encouragement to snigger at gays and their claims. But for all its undoubted vulgarity and excesses—indeed in part *because* of its (deliberate) vulgarity, *Heterodoxy* has a certain appeal. It packs a wallop. It's funny (sometimes). Richard Grenier's sardonic piece on some fanciful attributions of postseventies environmentalist scientific wisdom to Native American populations ("The Greening of the Merciless Red Man," October 1992) has merit as intelligent debunking. The quality of the paper's book reviews is surprisingly high; given the heavy ideological obligations the reviewers labor under, some have managed to turn in lively, intelligent, and amusing notices of PC literature, such as Jendi Reiter's roundup of politically correct children's books ("The Sisters Grim," October 1992) or Barbara Rhoades-Ellis's devastating account of the flawed methodology and presuppositions of Carol Gilligan and Lyn Mikel Brown's celebrated *Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls' Development* ("The News From Gilligan's Island: Big Girls Don't Cry," October 1993).

Above all *Heterodoxy* seems *alive*, as gray purveyors of official reports on academic life like the *Chronicle of Higher Education* or even its carefully jocular supplement, *Lingua Franca*, cannot hope to be. It seems to me that those on the academic left who reject the identification with PC cannot afford to ignore it, just because so much of it runs counter to their sympathies or because, as is undoubtedly the case, it has no liberal agenda to put in the place of the PC it despises. Even shaky attempts to capture the ground of satire and irreverent humor by such magazines as *Heterodoxy* and the *American Spectator* do not auger well for the appeal of the left; Americans are notoriously allergic to the smug and the humorless, and are likely to prefer the most meager japery to dourness and self-righteous hysteria.

The pseudo eighteenth-century diction of *Heterodoxy*'s descriptive subtitle, "Articles and Animadversions on Political Correctness and other Follies," gives a sense of one direction its ambition takes: its editors aspire to the great Swiftian tradition of laughter and opposition to pedantry and enthusiasm. Work-

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ing against this loftier notion is an undignified craving—amounting to a kind of rage—to be noticed, to be talked about at all costs. That's what appears to lie behind the editors' decision to market *Heterodoxy* by buying up subscription lists from leftist magazines like the *Nation* and sending the paper out free of charge. The resultant flood of angry letters from outraged recipients is gleefully printed in each issue. "Kindly remove my name from the mailing list of your repulsively reactionary, homophobic, bigoted publication," reads one of the milder ones. "If you ever send me any more of your garbage I will not only file a complaint with the Postmaster but also with the FBI," reads another.

The charge of "homophobia" is the one most frequently leveled at the paper. Like "racist" or "fascist" too often an all-purpose epithet, in this case it seems not far from the mark, although the paper has recently accorded the gay conservative David Brock sympathetic treatment. There does seem to be a near obsessive interest in gay sexual practices and a fair amount of coy invective ("sapphic," and so on). The editors' apparent conviction that despite warnings from governmental agencies and the scientific community, middle-class heterosexuals have nothing to fear from AIDS borders on a peculiarly ugly form of "I'm all right, Jack."

The articles in *Heterodoxy* are of several main types. There is the report from the fly on the wall at the lugubrious conference or seminar, in which the point is to string together the ludicrous things people say. There is the full-bore assault on big name academics like Stanley Fish or Catharine Stimpson or Houston Baker, who are inevitably called "academic commissars." The editors of *Heterodoxy*, who must have once themselves harbored the hope that after the revolution they would be made commissars, are lynx-eyed in detecting that ambition in others. There are muckraking pieces (the majority of the articles) intended to expose specific abuses of administrative or professorial power in the service of PC ideology. There is plenty of abuse to decry: the near universal acceptance of quotas in hiring, the racket of "sensitivity training," the assault on free speech, the official sanctioning of ethnic separatism. The most effective of the pieces in this category avoid rhetoric and stick to the dismaying facts, like the detailed account of the infiltration of the curriculum of a Maryland school district by Afrocentric hate literature ("Afro-Fascism on the Rise," September 1993). Occasionally the exposés seem needlessly overblown: the editors scrape the bottoms of some unpromising barrels for their copy, as in a piece on the louche goings on at something called More University, a cult establishment in California ("University of Sex," March 1994).

In a different category are the autobiographical pieces, which range from the jejune reflections of young persons who have suffered through four years of attempted political indoctrination at one expensive liberal arts institution or another, to the rather more weighty recollections of former left stalwarts like Victor Comerchero ("A Professor Looks

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Back at the Radical Years," April 1994) or David Horowitz's own guilty memories of collaborating with the Black Panther party in the early seventies ("Black Murder Inc.," March 1993).

Those close to the magazine say that from its inception *Heterodoxy* has been well subsidized by all the usual right-wing sources—Scaife, the Olin Foundation, and so on. It certainly doesn't *look* like a magazine a conservative would want to fund. With its amateur, not to say wretched, editorial standards—words left out, quotations mangled, typos in practically every other piece—and its scatological references and alarmist, conspiracy-mongering headlines ("Treason of the Clerks," "Women's Studies Imperialists," "Multicultural Mafia"), the magazine gives off more than a whiff of an "underground" paper of the sixties.

The hasty, headlong quality of *Heterodoxy* is no doubt meant to give the impression that its editors and contributors can't be bothered with civility in argument, still less such niceties as proofreading. There's a war on, the culture war, and they're all in the trenches. Horowitz, indeed, is said to think of the paper as a "*journal de combat.*" A contributor told me cheerfully that "in the culture wars, *Heterodoxy* is an attack dog."

In one of the think pieces that occasionally interrupt the stream of PC horror stories, Collier characterizes the journal as an expression of "the real counter-culture," which is to say a conservative counterculture ("The Culture, Stupid!" January 1993). "Those of us linked only by a mutual loathing of the smelly little orthodoxies are now the real counter-culture and we had better start acting like it," he declares. As exhortation, this strikes me as a little odd: "mutual loathing" seems an unstable basis for association.

Collier's remark echoes Orwell, who in his great essay on Dickens counterpoises the "smelly little orthodoxies which are now contending for our souls" to the qualities in Dickens that Orwell admires, notably his "free intelligence" and generous anger. *Heterodoxy* possesses intelligence, and it is always angry; if the intelligence were freer and the anger more generous, its opposition to the smelly little orthodoxies might inspire more confidence. □

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Tom Gallagher

A STEELWORKER'S STEELWORKER

When Ed Sadlowski retired a while back, his friends tried to throw him a surprise party. They failed as far as the honoree was concerned—people on the street in South Chicago just kept telling him they'd see him Saturday night. But many of Sadlowski's out-of-town friends and supporters were amazed to find it has been so long since his insurgent campaign for the presidency of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) and wondered if an era has passed: His? Theirs? The labor movement's?

At age fifty-six retirement came early for Sadlowski himself, even though it was thirty-seven years since Oil Can Eddie first reported for work at the U.S. Steel South Works. Where the event falls within the life cycle of the American labor movement is not so easy to say. Sadlowski's son told the crowd at the not-so-surprising party that the evening's opening round of "Solidarity Forever" was the first time he and his three sisters had sung together since those days when fifty guys sang that song in his family's basement every night for a month. It's a safe bet that in the intervening sixteen years fifty people had not gathered to sing "When the union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall run" for thirty nights (or for three nights) straight anywhere in the United States.

But at least on this one night three hundred showed up to sing it one more time in Hilding Anderson Hall, named for one of the ten steelworkers killed at the 1937 Republic Steel Massacre and headquarters of South Works Local 65, the first basic steel local the Steelworkers Organizing Committee ever chartered. The local's first president was the picket captain that day at Republic. In 1965 its president was Ed Sadlowski. Eight years later, unlike many union rebels before him who let their union staff jobs take the edge off their militancy, Sadlowski bucked the official slate and ran for director of the 130,000-member Chicago District 31, by far the largest and most powerful in the 1.4 million member union.

Union officials said Sadlowski lost. His people said he won. Joe Rauh of the Americans for Democratic Action; Ken Yablonski, son of murdered Mineworkers For Democracy leader Jock Yablonski; and Leon Despres, one-time Chicago city councilman active in the defense of the 1937 Republic strikers, brought national attention to the insurgents' case. And finally the Department of Labor decided Sadlowski was indeed robbed. He won the next year's court-ordered rerun two-to-one. So when Sadlowski's Steelworkers Fight Back slate took on the designated successors of retiring Steelworkers president I.W. Abel in 1977, the campaign attracted interest unmatched until Ron Carey's recent successful quest for the Teamster presidency.

In the three years prior to Sadlowski's campaign, steel companies had eliminated forty thousand jobs. The Fight Back slate considered national union leadership partially responsible for those layoffs by virtue of its agreeing to establish productivity committees to work with management on speed-up and job combinations—not a difficult argument to make, with U.S. Steel running ads in which union leader "I.W. Abel tells how America can become more productive." (A U.S. Steel internal memo later warned plant superintendents against posting the ad in plants so as not to embarrass Abel, who "has trusted U.S.S. not to do this.") They also faulted the leadership for insufficient effort to end company discrimination against blacks, Latins and women—and

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even for engaging in it themselves. They blamed them for giving away the right to strike in the Experimental Negotiating Agreement. They called for rank-and-file ratification of contracts and renewal of efforts to organize the unorganized.

Today, with job loss in the steel industry into the hundreds of thousands, the campaign's goals may seem to have been doomed from the start. But while they may have been futile, they were not naive; there was nothing of the Luddite about Sadlowski. In fact, his opponents called him anti-steelworker for his 1976 magazine interview advocating use of the wealth created in the steel industry to train steelworkers to be doctors or plumbers as technological advances eliminated the need for lifetimes spent servicing coke ovens.

So sixteen years later, as he sat in the worker assistance center that was all that remained of Local 65 and waited for a company representative to take him on a tour of the South Works the day before his retirement party, Sadlowski had been intellectually prepared for what he was about to see. So much had changed that when the company man arrived—smilingly introduced by Ed as "a union man gone bad"—he didn't even represent U.S. Steel but the USX Corporation. Once the world's largest corporation, U.S. Steel has been downgraded to a division, because the company now makes most of its money outside of steel.

None of the eleven thousand workers that Sadlowski represented at a plant once employing twenty thousand would be found at the South Works. By now everything remaining was considered useless: rotting railroad cars; hard hats, some with the names of steelworkers Sadlowski remembered; and the huge open buildings with union election slogans still scrawled on the beams where the overhead cranes once ran, now being torn down and sold for scrap. The new $92 million furnace was never even fired up because, as the USX man explained, the South Works simply could not compete with the mini-mills the Nucor Corporation has built since going into steel production in 1969. Each mini-mill produces a single product. Nucor pays lower wages. It has no long-term pension costs. It uses scrap metal only. The South Works may rise again, but only as raw material for steel made by a newer, leaner company. For now USX will clear the slag and sit tight on its valuable lakefront property. Some think the area will one day house a casino, so the land may again harbor dreams of individual fortune, but the soil will no longer support steelworkers with radical dreams about the collective welfare.

No other labor insurgency in the last forty years has so excited the interest of those who choose to see in the labor movement not just what is but what could be. This had been no simple good-government-in-the-union campaign. Sadlowski, known to take out-of-town visitors to the spot where Debs addressed the 1877 Pullman strikers, himself spoke the same language of working class radicalism. And as the videotapes of Sadlowski's old television interviews played in the back of the union hall the night of the party, it was painfully obvious that no one has talked that talk to as many people since that time.

The Steelworkers Fight Back slate did not win its election. It did win the majority of the votes in basic steel, but by that time the Steelworkers Union had also diversified and basic steel already represented only about a third of the union. Frustrated in its efforts in the South and unable to put anything together in Canada (current USWA president Lynn Williams of Toronto was on the "official" slate), it lost by a 56–44 margin.

Still, USWA officials decided to avoid any such serious insurgency in the future. To counter the ability of the officially backed candidates to raise 90 percent of their campaign funds from people on the union payroll, Steelworkers Fight Back had taken advantage of its high profile and raised money wherever it could. No more; after the 1977 election the USWA prohibited outside contributions to its election campaigns. And in 1982 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled by a 5–4 margin that such a prohibition was legal.

Although this level of rank and file rebellion has not been repeated, the Fight Back campaign did make its mark. As Oliver Montgom-

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ery, the slate's vice presidential candidate, reminded the retirement party audience, Leon Lynch would not have become the first black to hold USWA national office had the Abel forces not felt compelled to create a new post for him in an effort to counter Montgomery's presence on the Sadlowski ticket. And Local 65 continued its radical tradition by subsequently electing Sadlowski ally Alice Peurala the first woman president of a basic steel local. (She was later defeated by a candidate who called for a less militant, more accommodationist strategy. After it was tried, she won the post back.) Studs Terkel ended the tributes to Sadlowski on the theme of continuity and tradition, beginning with Ed's father's forty years as a steelworker and continuing on to Ed's son, about to start a job with the Madison Teacher's Union.

It would have been all too easy to leave Hilding Anderson Hall brooding about what might have been, but Ed himself told the crowd (notable for its total absence of major political, media, or industry figures) that although he might be retiring, he was still available if anyone had a serious interest in organizing the unorganized. It's improbable that anyone at Steelworker headquarters will take him up on his offer but, unlikely as it recently seemed, Nucor and the other mini-mill companies have demonstrated the viability of the American steel industry by adopting the innovations Big Steel held back on. Nucor is non-union, of course, and makes noises that it would close plants before dealing with a union, but this is what every steel company has said since U.S. Steel's Elbert Gary acknowledged back in 1921 that "the workmen were not always treated justly," but explained that things were different now and there was therefore "no necessity for labor unions."

Steel companies do not change their position; the only real variable in the capital-labor equation is the role of Washington. In 1937 the public stance of the Roosevelt White House was such that John L. Lewis could plausibly argue that "the president wants you to join the Congress of Industrial Organizations." In 1993 Clinton's Secretary of Labor, Robert Reich, declared that "the jury is still out on whether the traditional union is necessary for the new workplace."

For Studs Terkel's vision to be of more than sentimental interest and for Sadlowski or anyone else to make a dent in the ranks of the unorganized—in steel or anywhere else—the federal government will have to start sounding less like Elbert Gary and more like John L. Lewis. □

Michael Walzer

THE FIRST LOCARNO CONFERENCE

There has been a certain rapprochement between the American and European lefts over the past several years—a rapprochement in weakness and uncertainty, perhaps, but one marked also by a recognition of common interests and values, and common problems, too. One sign of this new sense of commonality is the enthusiasm with which European leftists, including left intellectuals who were once anti-American by reflex, greeted Bill Clinton's election. His issues, they discovered, were also theirs, and they hoped to gain impetus from his success. No doubt, this hope represents a considerable comedown from the transformative visions of the past. Social democracy is the only practical leftism that survives in European politics today, just as some kind of left liberalism is the only practical leftism in contemporary America. These two indeed have much in common, and so it follows that the internal critique of their inadequacies should also be a shared enterprise.

A lesser sign of rapprochement, then, is the new interest in *Dissent* on the left, so to speak, of the European left. For this internal critique has been our enterprise for many years, and it has led us to fashion a debate about market socialism, welfare, nationalism and ethnicity, liberalism, and civil society at a time when many European leftists were still constrained in their discussion of such topics by longstanding political commitments and doctrinal orthodoxies. These commitments and doctrines have not survived the collapse of the communist regimes in the East, and intellectual styles are different

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today—chastened but also open, skeptical, searching. Over the past decade, many *Dissent* articles have been translated in European journals, and the magazine itself has a small but growing readership in Western Europe and even in the East.

Our arguments once looked disembodied, merely speculative; certainly they were unencumbered by strategic or tactical considerations or by established institutions and party bureaucrats. Now they look useful—especially so as Europe confronts characteristically American problems, which have formed the necessary background of *Dissent*'s debates: immigration and pluralism, most obviously, but also the consumer culture, the underclass, the decline of the unions, and so on.

In May of this year, a small conference of European and American leftists was convened in Locarno, Switzerland, initiated by our Italian friends to mark the fortieth anniversary of *Dissent*, sponsored by the Italian Library (*Biblioteca Cantonale*) and the city of Locarno. The largest group of participants came from Italy (including the editors of two left magazines, *Micromega* and *Reset*), but there were also people from Sweden, France, Germany, and Britain, and four *Dissent* editors and writers. Discussions focused on nationalism, multiculturalism, and the welfare state, with a final session on the language and structure of left politics. Two of the conference papers, Mitchell Cohen's "Rooted Cosmopolitanism" and my own "Multiculturalism and Individualism" have already appeared in *Dissent*; the lively debate on the future of the welfare state will appear in subsequent issues in the form of articles by Joanne Barkan and Claus Offe; Richard Rorty's paper on "movements and campaigns" will be published in the Winter issue. All these pieces will also come out in Italian in *Micromega*.

The discussions were both intense and friendly, and they revealed what may turn out to be characteristic differences between European and American leftists (though the number of participants was too small to say this with any certainty). Among the people in Locarno, the Europeans were more worried than the Americans about nationalism, ethnic difference, and immigration (which is not to say that anyone was unworried about Bosnia, say, or Armenia and Azerbaijan). And the Europeans were more resigned than the Americans to the failure of policies aimed at full employment and economic growth—and less interested, therefore, in welfare reforms designed to get people back into the labor force; they preferred plans to separate work and income, and to guarantee only the latter.

The desire to explore these and other, related issues led to a general agreement to meet again next year. The Italian Library will once again act as chief sponsor and organizer, bringing in representatives of different East European lefts and expanding slightly the number of participants from the West. I want here to acknowledge the good work of Antonio Spadafora, director of the Library, and Maurizio Virolli, who coordinated the program. We look forward to an ongoing series of Locarno Conferences and to a continuing trans-Atlantic conversation on "the left project." □

Over the Rainbow

The first annual *Dissent* musical celebration, featuring the lyrics and poems of Yip Harburg, took place this past May at the Promenade Theater in New York before an almost full house and an enthusiastic audience. Thanks to the complete assumption of production costs by the Harburg Foundation, the celebration generated a significant sum of money for *Dissent*—as well as reminding our mostly sober editors and readers that wit, humor, and song are an important part of the culture of the left. The celebration was also a commemoration of Irving Howe, on the first anniversary of his death, and a chance to reaffirm our commitment to the politics he represented. We are grateful to the performers and to all those whose hard work made the occasion a success—especially to Deena Rosenberg and Ernie Harburg.

—The Editors □

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David Bromwich

A PASSION FOR POLITICS

NEVER STOP RUNNING: ALLARD LOWENSTEIN AND THE STRUGGLE TO SAVE AMERICAN LIBERALISM, by William H. Chafe. Basic Books, 1993. 556 pp., $28.00.

Allard Lowenstein was a liberal insurgent at the heart of the civil rights protests and the antiwar protests of the sixties. His gift was for organizing and speaking, and he had command of the great ability a reformer needs—of turning indifference to interest, and showing that fear has a common ground with hope. An impressive plurality of the democratic left who entered politics in the sixties and seventies owed their political awakening to him, and some of their names have become familiar: Bob Kerrey, Tom Harkin, Bill Bradley, Barney Frank. Never was there a more passionate recruiter; yet Lowenstein made his conversions by fair means. He asked his audience to think—to imagine vividly the abuses of power and to work out practical remedies from the open indignation that is the surest motive of reform. His message was always the same. In a system like ours, the exertions of individuals who band together can make a difference.

Here is the way he talked extemporaneously, to a crowd at Stanford University in 1963:

> I couldn't honestly be optimistic now about Mississippi except that I think you know, and I know, that we are going to win in Mississippi, that the feeling that somehow there is no progress is wrong. And that from the perspective of the United States and of the world, this little island of embittered people, shooting and beating and turning to brute force to terrify, are in the backwater of civilization and are going to be lost. Mississippi is not a foreign country in our midst—it's the foreign part of all of us in our midst. And we help ourselves, I think, as we help Mississippi.

The voice was clear and it covered the range from declamation to the gentlest testing of a thought. It was not expert or orotund; the speaker seldom coined a phrase.

He wrote one book, *Brutal Mandate* (1963), on South Africa, a polemic of the Garrisonian kind that does not date. In its pages can be found a description of Father Michael Scott that is also a portrait of the author, "full of a restraining patience and an urgent impatience, as if the two go hand in hand: the patience of a man certain that time would bring victory, an impatience that men do not prod time as much as they could." Lowenstein's influence in turning American policy from cooperative endurance of apartheid to active pressure for its abolition would be the achievement he pointed to with most substantial pride in later years. To his collaborators in the civil rights movement, this harmonized naturally with his work toward integration in the South; on the New Left, his allies were puzzled to reconcile his "activism" with his anticommunism. He was a hater of every kind of enslavement, and saw no contradiction in using his energies to oppose them all.

Lowenstein was born in 1929 to a prosperous Jewish family. His father, Gabriel, had come from Lithuania in 1906, an anticzarist radical; in New York, he worked in political campaigns for Morris Hillquit and Eugene Debs and helped to organize the garment workers. For a short time Gabriel Lowenstein taught biochemistry at the medical school at Columbia, then left teaching (much to his regret in later years)

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to start a chain of restaurants. Allard kept a map of Spain in his room, and the defeat of the Spanish Republic, which plunged him into a wordless grief for days, was the formative public event of his youth. But a private recognition seems to have been as important. Allard's mother had died when he was a year old, and though no one in the family ever told him so, he had a hunch, followed it into a *Who's Who* article on his father and, at the age of thirteen, found out that Florence Lowenstein, who had raised him and loved him, was his stepmother. The discovery may have fortified his early intuition that there are more people to care about than we can easily bring to mind.

He thwarted his family's expectations by going to college at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. An original choice over Columbia and Harvard, it gave him the opportunity to work for racial integration at the age of sixteen; at Chapel Hill too, he found a mentor in Frank Porter Graham, the president of the university. Lowenstein's college years were distinguished by political activity in North Carolina and by his teaching of the vocation of politics to contemporaries and elders. By graduation, he was a keen participant in the postwar student movement. Nominated in 1948 as vice president of the NSA (National Student Association), he gave a memorable speech from the floor on racism in America; and after serving as president in 1950–1951, he kept up an advisory interest in the group well into the sixties. When, in 1967, it came to be known that the NSA had been funded by the CIA, it was conjectured that Lowenstein had been a "witting" accomplice, but he always denied knowledge of the connection, as those who knew him have denied he had such knowledge. The case against him made by political enemies and backed by some historians is circumstantially plausible but unproved. He entered Yale Law School in 1954, where he absorbed himself in political work and nursed doubts about his suitability for a career in law. Two years in the army followed. "After you had gone," wrote a friend, "it seemed that our ranks had been depleted by more than one."

In the late fifties he worked for Hubert Humphrey, chiefly on issues relating to Africa. He passed up a chance to run for Congress in 1960, at the advice of the New York reform Democrats who knew him best—prudential advice, of the it-can't-be-done variety that he would learn to disregard as he came into his powers. Over the next few years, he used university appointments at North Carolina State and Stanford as bases of operations for civil-rights work in the South. He broke twice with the revolutionary left of the sixties, both times over tactics that implied a difference of principle. In Mississippi, during the Freedom Summer of 1964, Lowenstein opposed the separation of white from black political workers enforced by the new leadership of SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), and their demotion of voting rights to a secondary good on the scale of social change. He did not care, either, for the same group's advocacy, and inculcation in schools, of the doctrines of Fanon, Lenin, and Marx—inspirations, as he saw it, of doubtful utility to a nonviolent democratic politics in America. Something similar would occur in his relations with the organizers of the "New Mobilization" marches against the Vietnam War in 1969. One of the earliest whole-length critics of the war, Lowenstein opposed the inclusive strategy that brought flag-burners, terrorists, and frank advocates of victory for the communists into the big protest family.

In 1967, Allard Lowenstein organized the Dump Johnson movement in the Democratic party, persuaded Eugene McCarthy to enter the New Hampshire primary, and eventually extracted the decision not to seek re-election from a president who three years earlier had won the biggest landslide in American history. Ronnie Dugger remembered what it was like in Texas in August 1967:

> [Lowenstein] didn't even have a candidate at that time. But he came down and he was organizing and putting it together, telling us it could be done, that we were not alone. That was very important, that we were not alone. And then I remember taking him to the airport afterwards and watching him walk up the ramp, and I thought, my God, there goes one man trying to take on the entire

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system alone, and I felt a certain chill. It was pretty damn impressive.

In 1968, in the shadow of larger defeats, he was elected to Congress from Nassau County and became the most resourceful new member that the House of Representatives has seen. He spoke consistently from the floor against the Vietnam War; voted against ABM (anti-ballistic missiles), against preventive detention, for national health insurance; late in 1969, he sought a vote of No Confidence on President Nixon's conduct of the war, and he worked without pause for reform of the House rules to allow debates of more than thirty minutes on such matters as appropriations for the war. He also started early and maintained a series of congressional forums that met every two weeks to promote an exchange of views on public issues with Long Island voters. In 1970, the Republicans gerrymandered his district to cut out the antiwar constituencies. He lost against a dirty campaign by Norman Lent, run partly from Washington, but he was still considered dangerous. The following year he appeared as number seven on the Nixon White House Enemies List. His several subsequent runs for Congress were unsuccessful.

Robert Kennedy was murdered on June 5, 1968, on the way to his room at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles: a phone call had already been placed for him to ask Lowenstein to join the campaign, and on the other end Lowenstein was still holding the line when the news flashed on television that Kennedy had been shot. This was the crisis of his later life. He would bring back the name of Robert Kennedy in almost every speech, and talked in a strain that identified Kennedy, generously and ideally, with his own hopes for America. As those hopes went unrealized in the Nixon years, Lowenstein's thoughts about June 5 sharpened his sense of the debt political power owed to violence in America. His discouragement deepened in the mid-seventies with the refusal of the Los Angeles police and the district attorney to explain discrepancies in the public record of the shooting. Sirhan Sirhan, the convicted assassin, had held a gun that could fire eight bullets, yet at least ten bullets were fired (the FBI report said twelve); ceiling panels, impounded by the police and said to contain embedded bullets, had mysteriously vanished; the fatal shot was point-blank to the back of the head, yet Sirhan was in front of Kennedy at all times and never closer than several feet away.

Lowenstein, who had no theory of the assassination, only questions, made the best case that has ever been made for pressing such inquiries patiently. He saw a distinct relationship between the unsolved killings of the sixties and prospects for reform:

> We have made a good start toward preventing the repetition of some past abuses of power, especially government abuses, because we have learned about those abuses and have set out to guard against them. It seems elementary, for example, that if groups do exist that can eliminate national figures and get away with it, they are unlikely to have sprung into existence only on occasions of state murders. How are they occupied between-times?
>
> James R. Hoffa did not vanish after a rendezvous with a James Earl Ray "acting alone," loose nuts did not do in the Yablonskis, new editions of Lee Harvey Oswald or Sirhan Sirhan did not murder Sam Giancana in the basement of his home while he was under twenty-four-hour guard by the FBI. It is time to accept the fact that the question is not whether groups with such power exist, but how these groups use their power, who their allies are—in and out of government—and what if anything can be done to protect democratic process against forces and alliances that operate out of sight and often beyond the limits set by the law.

Briefly in the late seventies, Lowenstein worked at the UN under Andrew Young. He was shot to death in his law office in 1980 by Dennis Sweeney, a friend and young co-worker from the civil-rights struggles who in later years had taken a more violent path, lost his reason, and fixed the blame on a few old associates.

Lucky in the journalistic coverage he attracted when alive, from David Halberstam, Flora Lewis, Hendrik Hertzberg, and many others, Lowenstein has been remarkably un-

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lucky in his biographers. After his death, Teresa Carpenter wrote for the *Village Voice* a story about the victim and the assassin, a story politically thoughtless, emotionally lurid, and marred by an undertone of gloating satisfaction, which appeared to be based on an interview with Dennis Sweeney that Carpenter had never in fact conducted. David Harris's memoir, *Dreams Die Hard* (1982), was a group portrait of Lowenstein, Sweeney, and Harris himself, by a Stanford radical who for a time had admired Lowenstein and been respected by him in turn, a man of sufficient courage to go to prison for resisting the draft. Yet Harris's book betrayed an involuntary apathy with regard to his earlier self, and his treatment of Lowenstein showed the acrobatic condescension of a weaker to a stronger mind. Richard Cummings's *The Pied Piper* (1985) was a competent journalistic biography, often iconoclastic to no point, pressing hard the CIA spy thesis, but filled with enough information to generate a smaller and better book. A review of Cummings's book by Hendrik Hertzberg, in the *New York Review of Books*, contained a sensitive portrait of Lowenstein. It is almost the only exception to the dismal record and is worth looking up.

Dreams Die Hard, The Pied Piper, and *Never Stop Running* are variations on a single title—a three-word backhanded blow by the undeceived against the self-deceived. William Chafe's new biography has less political data than Cummings's, with more cluttered paraphernalia of sympathy, and the effect is oppressive. The author is eager to dissociate himself from the low facts of politics, and now and then deplores that Lowenstein should have "indulged that side of his personality that willingly engaged in intrigue and behind-the-scenes maneuvering." By the end of the book, he is also regretting that "from college all the way through the late 1970s, [Lowenstein] eschewed acting intelligently in his own interest." That pretty well sandbags him from both sides. Of course, concedes Chafe, "Lowenstein had the genius and rhetorical skill to galvanize generations of American young people for a life of political commitment and political reform; but" (you might think that was enough for one life, but) "did he have the ability to find personal happiness as well?" What shall we say? We certainly all want happiness, and have long wished for better advice on how to obtain it, in this our talking America.

Personal happiness turns out to mean, to Chafe, an honest avowal of carnal desires. Lowenstein married and had three children, but he spent as little time with his family as most politicians, and was drawn to young men in ways he could not acknowledge directly. On all of these matters Chafe is full of speculation. Yet he has written a book about a great speaker and a fine writer that scarcely quotes his subject's speeches or writings for more than a phrase. *Never Stop Running* is a trove of other people's thoughts about Lowenstein's thinking, his influence, and most of all his probable or possible motives. On the last of these topics, Lowenstein himself might be granted anyway a minimal authority; but the diaries he kept, with their public-headline style, samples of which were reproduced by Cummings ("After One Month, A.L. Not Pleased with Self, Not Sure Law Is It"), are used by Chafe so sparingly one may forget that they exist. To what end has this huge clearance been made?

A reader in search of historical information could not reconstruct from *Never Stop Running* the most modest and approximate picture of American politics in the years of Lowenstein's apprenticeship and ascendancy. There is much tut-tutting about his anticommunism, as if that was not a common element of liberal ideology for three decades or more; and the barest sketch is offered of the party system Lowenstein inherited, built from city and state machines where a young man would be drawn by loyalty to established elders. On matters requiring more detail, the rendering is worse than dim. When, in the summer of 1964, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic party tried to unseat the Mississippi delegation at the Democratic convention, a symbolic compromise was worked out with the approval of Martin Luther King, Jr., Bayard Rustin, and Joseph Rauh, as well as Lowenstein. In an aftershock from the earlier clash over SNCC's identity politics, Lowenstein was held answerable for the

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letdown. Eleanor Holmes Norton, who was on the scene and knew him well, said later that he dealt squarely and did not deserve to be blamed. Her testimony is quoted by Cummings. It is ignored by Chafe, who is too busy sifting Lowenstein's imputable anxieties to offer a cogent account: "What is unmistakably clear . . . is that Lowenstein was *perceived*, particularly by SNCC supporters, as part and parcel of what they considered a 'sell-out' to the white liberal establishment." And: "Whatever the actual truth, the *impression* arose, based on months of tension about the Freedom Summer project, that this was precisely the kind of compromise Lowenstein might have engineered" (italics in original). At critical points the narrative shifts to the manner of a blandly impartial guidance counselor. Since facts are constituted by "impressions" and "perceptions," how can we know for sure?

All the more global judgments are deeply caring. "What Lowenstein failed to realize," says Chafe in a caption-summary of the book's title, "was that traveling itself was part of the problem, and that he could never find the relationship he craved until he stopped running long enough to decide who he was." And so, we are to conclude that this thoughtful and persistent man never quite found the proper "validation" for his "identity." Or as Chafe puts it more bluntly: "Al lacked self-esteem, and this lack was somehow connected to his ethnicity." Accordingly, "many if not most of Lowenstein's political decisions reflected private insecurities and concerns." The phrase "many if not most," and the weasel-word "reflected" (derived directly from? related distantly to?) give a fair sense of the precision of the style. As for moral analysis: "partly because of his anticommunism, Lowenstein was a profound individualist." In fact, for Lowenstein as for many others, the relation between these beliefs was just the reverse. Somebody who misses this point cannot be trusted to rise above intellectual folklore.

The working method of the folklorist is to turn the most divergent principles into mutually worthy pieties. Thus, looking at Lowenstein's strictures against the violence of SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) and the radical student mob, Chafe writes: "By selectively magnifying the most outrageous acts of the left, Lowenstein accentuated his own case; he also provoked the left to equally distorted expressions of anger." This is historically false and comes from the trimming notion that some credit for goodwill can usually be shared by everyone. But justice is not a pleasant halfway point between truth and lies. The idea that Lowenstein, by speaking his mind, could do anything to intensify the noxious conduct of a man like Tom Hayden, is exorbitant. Chafe would like in retrospect to offend *none* of the protest-movers of the sixties, and he thinks Lowenstein reacted too strongly against the anti-American displays of some of the marchers. It is true that compared to Lowenstein, the organizers of the New Mobilization were political innocents, but they should not have been proud of their innocence. Lowenstein was an idealist who knew that protests are for recruiting public opinion to your side. To give a gratuitous shock to the feelings of large numbers of Americans would, he believed, harden their contempt for the protesters without in any measure advancing their knowledge of the issue. The 1972 election unhappily confirmed his view.

However, the identity-archive style of history writing seldom descends to politics. Chafe has discovered that the personal is the political. That lesson is then read out with Lowenstein's life as the text, and so pleased is Chafe with his emphasis that he "thematizes" the chapter titles: "The *Personal* Side of the Political" goes one; and another, "The *Political* Side of the Personal" (italics in original). The unpolitical reader is kept warmly hoping that Allard Lowenstein will achieve a therapeutic outcome and be rewarded at last with a normal life. Chafe is a great believer in normality—an idea whose range of reference has altered since the fifties without fundamentally changing the conformist message. In its many digressive subchapters, *Never Stop Running* fairly bursts with beaming affirmatives and imperatives. "Come out, Al," it seems to say, "and discover your

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gay identity." Or, failing that, "Go all the way into your marriage, commit yourself, *stop running from yourself.*" The epilogue is a meditation about how intertwined Lowenstein's private deficiencies were with his public strengths. But Chafe has been obliged by his plotline to uncover public weaknesses (that "reflecting" again) to match the private ones; so that, after many detours, we are comfortably back in a familiar genre after all—the popular ego-analytic fifties tear-jerker, which proved that Karl Marx hated his father and that Darwin was a basket-case hypochondriac. These men led unbalanced lives, and they are not to be taken as role models for the young.

One thing about Lowenstein no study has quite evoked is his sense of humor. What were his plans after losing the congressional race in 1970? Well, none "beyond attending the lame-duck session of Congress. The lame ducks like me will quack, and the lame quacks will duck." The SDS reviled him, and never won an argument against him, but once, in desperation, they tried to scatter his wits by a piece of guerrilla theater. This was a few days before the 1968 Democratic convention. Someone called "Big Daddy" (the radicals' nickname for Lowenstein) plays a recorder to entice them to come to Chicago; they come, and are machine-gunned by figures in khaki. How to answer the shocking crudeness of the self-pity? "The kids who went to Chicago were just machine-gunned by someone from SDS," Lowenstein summarized instantly. "But on the basis of past experience, they will recover." A similar adroitness came to be discernible in the best of his followers. At the "Encampment for Citizenship" Lowenstein ran in the summer of 1965, Barney Frank was scheduled to debate Tom Hayden on whether it is possible to work within the system, and Hayden opted out by sitting in the audience, refusing to get on stage because that would be too hierarchical. "I told him," Frank recalled, "he was such a 'grass root,' I didn't know whether to debate him or water him."

The self-pity is worth dwelling on. It was the original emotion of a generation, and it had a soil in real catastrophes—the murder of President Kennedy and of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy; the stream of presidential lies about the Vietnam War; the failure of the country's representative bodies to check the abuses of constitutional power that sustained the war. But the self-pity had a longer lease than the public engagements of the people it inhabited; its influence on American culture and politics would carry far into the next decades. Lowenstein saw this early, and he gave a warning. "There are people who knocked on a few doors and went to a few marches and when they didn't get everything they hoped for, they said: 'You can't change the system.' This is only a beginning." He never fed the self-pity, as so many popular artists did, or bowed when its resentments turned to demands, as so many educators did. There was a grown-up ethic of capitulation in those years, which no one yet has explained—people who seemed to say "Ask me for anything and let me cave in." Lowenstein did not join that drift, and one reason may have been that he understood, from within, the temptation of self-pity, its numbing authority and the distinctions it lets you lose sight of. The political thug and the street thug were types known to him by more than their costumes at a time when young marchers had lost the ability to pick them out in a crowd. He taught reformers to watch out for thugs, and he was not thanked for the lesson.

His feeling for the helpless, which he spoke of as his motive for getting into politics, had at heart a wish to multiply the impalpable ties by which people are bound to one another. Somebody said after hearing him speak, "I was a bit put off by his neediness," and that response catches a genuine part of his appeal, which his followers heard more susceptibly. There was a charm that was almost a demand, in the patience with which he drew himself out and drew his listeners in. The motive could seem partly unconfessed, as it often does with people who treat ideals as if they were real. His manner was fraught with a tremor of engagement always on the stretch: not like the liberal politician who says routinely "I feel your

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pain"; more like one who says: "I feel your desire to do good, each of you in your way." A certain pleading (never plaintiveness) was in the voice; to persuade without its undersong would have gone against his nature and made the voice no longer his. The swelling of sympathy to a brink where it passes into a promise of intimacy—a promise that nothing political could ever fulfill—was the personal trait the warmest of his followers were never sure how to read. Five minutes of talk with Lowenstein would have shamed a well-meaning scholar out of resorting to so dingy a sophistry as "The personal is the political." Still, to those for whom the presence of the man left a residue more memorable than argument, just listening to him seemed to show that politics can have a melody.

His close ties were with mentors like Frank Graham and Eleanor Roosevelt and cherished old friends like Lucille Kohn. After them in his affections, but over shorter periods, came the young men he trusted as organizers. In their company he asserted on occasion a physical intimacy: he liked to sleep in the same bed and hug. By these advances some of his followers were surprised, or repelled. Others, as the anecdotes make clear, expected such an approach and were disturbed when it never came. He craved the intimacy of the long talk that led to a long embrace, and about this nothing wiser is likely to be said than the words of his best friend from childhood, Sanford Friedman: "A really deep, personal, satisfying relationship was not in Allard's stars." He was a political worker—a fact the biographers forget at intervals. It is odd to find ourselves regretting this defect in a political worker. Posthumously, he makes unsatisfied friends of us all.

People tended to revere him, as he revered select heroes like Norman Thomas, and there is a problem in our culture now about revering anyone at all. It is seen as drawing upon an energy more appropriate to a cause than a person; if directed upon a person, the feeling had better lead to some consummation. The adulation felt for pop celebrities and the heroes of sports is a different phenomenon that really points to the depth of our acquired timidity. Clever people think of reverence as contaminated by desire, and think of desire itself as having a physical correlative and payoff. When it lacks that, we must be dealing with a symptom that "masks" something. This way of assessing the emotion of reverence is new, but it has become fixed in American culture since the seventies, so that someone who defies the pattern seems involved in a sort of evasion. The very language that Lowenstein spoke, with its assurance of great leaders in a vivid past, can seem an anachronism. In this sense the historians and the biographers, like the memoir writers and reporters who fail to capture his tone, are making a mistake no worse than many people meeting him today would be likely to make. One piece of arrogance, at least, we can guard against: the assumption that our side of the anachronism affords a special insight into his motives in politics. For politics can be a passion. It is not one for most people, including writers of the lives of politicians, but it was for Lowenstein, and to understand him you have to imagine what it would be to relish a knowledge of alignments and opportunities and the usable history of local feelings, as if those things could be depended on for their daily pungency.

The failure of the journalists and scholars who have written his life is above all a failure of political interest. From this deficit of intellectual sympathy, it is hardly possible to convey the character of his politics, rooted as they were in loves and hates so earnest as to seem "obsessive" to the clueless. His individualism is the other quality that is said to place him at a distance from the institution-oriented reformers of today. Here, is the default of imagination his or ours? In 1967, when he thought of the movement to dump Johnson, he started alone. Even his nearest associates said, "This time he's cracked." Robert Kennedy was his initial choice of a candidate, but at first Kennedy held back. When he did enter the primaries, however, he wanted Lowenstein at his side: on a bus ride from a Democratic dinner in Buffalo, he made his appeal and Lowenstein said: "As much as I'm for you, I'm staying with McCarthy."

Kennedy then wrote a note "For Al, who knew the lesson of Emerson and taught it to the

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rest of us: 'They did not yet see, and thousands of young men as hopeful now crowding to the barriers of their careers do not yet see, *that if a single man plant himself on his convictions and there abide, the huge world will come round to him.*' " Nothing finer can be said about this statement than that it is true. But it is good to think of Kennedy writing it, good, even, to think of him remembering Emerson's word *instincts* as *convictions*. The convictions of Allard Lowenstein were as inveterate as instincts, and his every speech and gesture held practical proof of the idea that one person can make a difference. A few weeks earlier Kennedy had announced that he would not run except in "unforeseen circumstances." The man now beside him on the bus had told him then, "*I'm* an unforeseen circumstance," and his life made thousands know what that could mean. □

Ann Snitow

RETURNING TO THE WELL

THE DIALECTIC OF SEX: THE CASE FOR FEMINIST REVOLUTION, by Shulamith Firestone. William Morrow, 1970. (Reissued in 1993.) 224 pp. $10.00, paper.

Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* has been reissued, after many mysterious years out of print. It was written twenty-five years ago, when the author was twenty-five and the modern U.S. women's movement was about three. Firestone was there from the beginning, first in Chicago SDS (Students for a Democratic Society), defying sexist catcalls from New Left men, then in New York, co-founding Redstockings and New York Radical Feminists, and co-editing the early, hot publishing ventures of the movement, *Notes from the First Year* (then the *Second* and *Third Year*).

In those "Years," which have attracted metaphors like "explosion" and "revolution" and my own favorite, "mushroom effect," I didn't know the rules, so I reviewed *The Dialectic of Sex* on Nanette Rainone's WBAI radio show, "Womankind," even though I was in Firestone's women's group at the time, the "Stanton-Anthony Brigade" of New York Radical Feminists. Because of the bad, paper-hoarding habits of a lifetime I still have that review—which, alas, includes no mention that I was then closely acquainted with the author. My hopes to discover either prescience or idiocy (which I planned, of course, with hindsight to forgive myself) have both been disappointed on re-reading this handwritten souvenir of 1970. There is, however, a more solid inheritance: I liked the book then and I like it still—if, inevitably, with a difference. Once again, I find it remarkable.

In the interval between my two readings, *The Dialectic of Sex* has remained famous—either for being radical or being outrageous—depending on who is (half) remembering it. From the first, it was demonized for some of its epigrams ("pregnancy is barbaric") or for some of its speculative practical suggestions (children should be raised by groups bound by seven- to ten-year contracts because the family, like a genetic code, reproduces the domination of men over women and children). During the backlash years, conservatives used the book as a convenient proof of the dangerous madness of feminist desires. (They refuse to be mothers! They want babies from test tubes!) During those same years, some feminists used the book to show how short-sighted, overweening, or half-baked the early women's movement had sometimes been. (They didn't like mothers! They wanted babies from test tubes!) Certainly a movement that was changing, testing its basic propositions, settling down for what looks like a long haul has used the book to measure distances: "Firestone promised us a rose garden; look how far we have come; we no longer believe in rose gardens."

No doubt Firestone invites some of these irritated readings. Her bold voice and sailing pace seem at odds with the enormity and difficulty of the change she is seeking. She is like a wonderful child who wants the moon, something big, bright, and at a distance she's not concerned to estimate. This sort of person appears (is created? is momentarily heard?) at the beginning of movements. Magnificent and stunned by insight, they tell us we must change our lives; the way we live is intolerable. Then they stagger off, leaving the

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less moonstruck but considerably brightened to try to live the insight out.

The ambition of the text has certainly been counted as one of its offenses: "Who does this little girl think she is?" She introduces almost the entire spectrum of subsequent movement interests in one big bang. She points out the limitations of Marx and Freud; she anatomizes the inner, often gendered dynamics of race and class; she compares the oppression of women and children (and finds them deeply analogous); then she goes on to make a chart of the great rolling dialectic of history from nomads to the disappearance of "culture" as we know it and the "realization of the conceivable in the actual."

Even in 1970, I seem to have felt the scary undertow of this all-encompassing wave. I wrote: "Perhaps the reason membership in the women's movement is so often a painful experience is that the more we know, the more powerless and overwhelmed we feel. Knowledge doesn't turn out to be the instant kind of power we first expected it to be. In fact, the more conscious we become, the more lonely and naked we are in the middle of what we now understand to be an unfriendly situation." Unfriendly situation! This sort of mournful irony, this shy understatement of male intransigence is so far from Shulie's tone. She was a great leader partly because she eschewed such hedging. The risks she took opened a path. I took it and am eternally grateful to her.

Yet at some moments, *The Dialectic of Sex* wears the unassuming disguise of a mere advice book. The prose bops along, with its summings-up of the little gender knots of daily life. Finally, though, there's always a trick; instead of the bromide that usually follows this now familiar kind of popularization, Firestone ends her snappy accounts of sexism with this warning: there is no private solution, dear reader, no short-term fix. There is only the revolution. Ann Landers from Hell, she makes mincemeat of the very concept "advice."

Her true genre is Utopia: "[I]n our new society, humanity could finally revert to its natural polymorphous sexuality. . . . [A]ll relationships would be based on love alone, uncorrupted by dependencies and resulting class inequalities." "Good luck," I find myself thinking, but could this sarcasm be one symptom of the post-sixties taboo on mentioning such far-off desires, such confident demands for structural transformation? We are allergic to utopia just now, often seeing any sweeping prefigurative thinking as falsely universalizing, naive, out of touch with the hardness of power. Certainly Firestone's text is vulnerable to such criticisms. It can easily be dismissed as marginal ("cybernetic communism," ha, ha). Or her grand gestures, which clear families, races, classes from the board of history, can be dismissed as totalitarian. But this is to read the text out of its time. In an unequivocal voice now rare, Firestone simply insists that only fundamental reordering will change women's unfriendly situation, and that parts of that restructuring are currently imaginable in the West, while other parts are still only dreams.

The dynamism of Marxism, the flowing sixties atmosphere, and the general tendency of feminist utopians to dream of amniotic bliss—all meet in *The Dialectic of Sex*. At that inspired moment, opposites—and barriers—seemed about to dissolve. The book is full of wishful fusions between contradictory concepts. For example, it begins:

> Sex class is so deep as to be invisible. Or it may appear as a superficial inequality, one that can be solved by merely a few reforms, or perhaps by the full integration of women into the labor force. But the reaction of the common man, woman, and child—"*That?* Why you can't change *that!* You must be out of your mind!"—is the closest to the truth. We are talking about something every bit as deep as that. This gut reaction—the assumption that, even when they don't know it, feminists are talking about changing a fundamental biological condition—is an honest one. That so profound a change cannot be easily fitted into traditional categories of thought, e.g. "political," is not because these categories do not apply but because they are not big enough: radical feminism bursts through them. If there were another word more all-embracing than *revolution* we would use it.

Typically, the protean Firestone is here the

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first essentialist feminist and the first social constructionist. She felt she could have it both ways, could claim the body as cause, as female prison, then could break the locks through social transformation. The pace at which modern Western societies seemed to be moving, the expansion of possibilities from the 1950s to the 1970s, lifted what Firestone saw as the heavy burden of biology off many women in the West. Biology-as-destiny was their past, but not their future.

Ironically enough, though feminist theory has moved steadily away from such biological determinism, feminists now have much lower expectations than Firestone's for the dissolving of "differences" like gender or race. These days, difference is either tolerated or valued as an axiom of political life. Contemporary feminists tend to be skeptical about the end of "othering."

Even with hindsight I find it hard to sort out my feelings about movement hopefulness in general. Feminism by its very nature demands such basic changes that none of its work would make much sense without an Enlightenment confidence in progress, without a belief in the human capacity to give conscious shape to ourselves. Yet part of what has happened to feminist thought since Firestone is the development of wise, rich doubts on these very matters. For those who remain feminist activists, these doubts are now baggage, the necessary, the useful impediments one carries with one on long journeys. I miss Firestone's avid joy, but I accept its absence as one by-product of the movement's longevity.

Now is a particularly good time to read or re-read *The Dialectic of Sex*. Ten years ago it might well have seemed merely dated, with its confidence in "cybernation" and its brash social generalizations about male and female, black and white (and most objectionably at moments about homosexuality). A decade ago, the sixties were under vicious attack and even the most committed sixties people felt bitten, no longer in tune with sixties ardor.

But the wheel has turned again, and *The Dialectic of Sex* will now be exciting to a number of different sorts of readers. For those who are re-reading, this is a period of memories and memoirs. Many feminist scholars and activists of a certain age have had their long, second thoughts, have put in their time in the necessary work of refining, revising, glossing, and pruning feminism, and may be interested in going to the well again to feel what that first energy was like.

Firestone felt herself to be throwing off a yoke, and in her first gallop, she wrote fast, wildly, freely. Those who came after have had to work at a slower pace, to take greater care. We police ourselves and each other more, while Firestone was shamelessly willing to generalize, speculate, make mistakes. To re-experience this unapologetic voice now is tonic.

For a new generation of readers, Firestone is movement history. Just what *was* it about the women's liberation movement that so took the culture by storm that—with whatever shortcomings, whatever waterings-down—it still has the power to interpret experience for millions? Young readers will sometimes think, "I already know this," then with some historical sense will, I hope, shake themselves and register that in 1970 no one knew any of it, even though it was all always already there to know.

For readers of whatever generation who have been following the feminist story line, the book's precocity gives little gooses of surprise. For example, who remembers that John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* is fully anticipated in Firestone's dazzling chapter on culture? And move over Donna Haraway on cyborgs: " . . . to grant that the sexual imbalance of power is biologically based is not to lose our case. . . . [T]he 'natural' is not necessarily a 'human' value." (Like Haraway, Firestone would rather be a cyborg than a goddess.) If her reading of Freud has been outdistanced, it is a pleasure to find here the still durable historical point that "Freudianism and feminism are made of the same stuff." Indeed, for a text so famous for its iconoclasm, the book devotes a lot of loving attention to the masters and the past. Radical, it returns to founding texts. It is a love letter to Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony

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(in 1970, lost to history or scorned). It converses respectfully with Marx and Freud, and its hero is Simone de Beauvoir. It honors its dead and refuses the obfuscations of revisionists.

When one remembers that the feminist bookshelf wasn't a foot long in 1970, the fullness, clarity and force of Firestone's feminism is simply amazing. (It's touching to see that her only source on childhood is the admirable Philippe Ariès and that she thinks there is no tradition of women's utopias. Today the library shelves are stuffed with feminist books on childhood and with feminist utopias old and new—and all in print.) She sought what roots she could find, and overnight she produced sturdy, waving green branches. Her analysis of women's daily experience—in love, in sex, in (mostly repressed) world-building—is as fresh and right as it seemed then; I regret to say this part of her work hasn't dated at all:

> *The sex privatization of women is the process whereby women are blinded to their generality as a class which renders them invisible as individuals to the male eye. . . .*
>
> Women everywhere rush to squeeze into the glass slipper, forcing and mutilating their bodies with diets and beauty programs, clothes and makeup, anything to become the punk prince's dream girl. But they have no choice. If they don't the penalties are enormous: their social legitimacy is at stake.
>
> Thus women become more and more look-alike. But at the same time they are expected to express their individuality through their physical appearance. Thus they are kept coming and going, at one and the same time trying to express their similarity and their uniqueness. The demands of Sex Privatization contradict the demands of the Beauty Ideal, causing the severe feminine neurosis about personal appearance.
>
> But this conflict itself has an important political function. When women begin to look more and more alike, distinguished only by the degree to which they differ from a paper ideal, they can be more easily stereotyped as a class: they look alike, they think alike, and even worse, they are so stupid they believe they are not alike. . . .

A hundred articles and books have since sorted through these painful paradoxes, major sources of female self-loathing, but here they are, in a witty, full-blown description on Day One. Firestone criticizes the false eroticism of this essentially bleak sexual landscape, but she draws back from the antipornography conclusions of a less insurgent, later time:

> In conclusion, I want to add a note about the special difficulties of attacking the sex class system through its means of cultural indoctrination. Sex objects *are* beautiful. An attack on them can be confused with an attack on beauty itself. Feminists need not get so pious in their efforts that they feel they must flatly deny the beauty of the face on the cover of *Vogue*. For this is not the point. The real question is: is the face beautiful in a *human* way—does it allow for growth and flux and decay, does it express negative as well as positive emotions . . . ?
>
> To attack eroticism creates similar problems. Eroticism is *exciting*. No one wants to get rid of it. Life would be a drab and routine affair without at least that spark. That's just the point. Why has all joy and excitement been concentrated, driven into one narrow, difficult-to-find alley of human experience, and all the rest laid waste? When we demand the elimination of eroticism, we mean not the elimination of sexual joy and excitement but its rediffusion over—there's plenty to go around, it increases with use—the spectrum of our lives.

So, sex, yes; beauty, yes; freedom, yes; an end to the boundary of gender altogether, yes—and to all boundaries. This was then. Our time is different, but this very fact is relevant evidence of the relentlessness and promise of change. □

Don't Forget to Give Your Friends the Gift of Thought.

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Sean Wilentz

A SENSE OF THE PAST

THE WATERWORKS, by E.L. Doctorow. Random House, 1994. 253 pp. $23.00.

The Waterworks is E.L. Doctorow's latest meditation on history, memory, genius, and the City of New York. And also on municipal corruption, big-city newspapers (and toadying big-city newspaper tycoons), science, technology, the homeless, and the evils of private health care run amok.

In many respects, it is the most conventionally plotted of Doctorow's New York books—a combination science fiction allegory and detective novel straight out of Edgar Allan Poe. After the boy's-eye views of *World's Fair* and *Billy Bathgate*, Doctorow is back to a more accessible story, told by an adult narrator. Yet Doctorow also takes some large risks in *The Waterworks*, by dealing for the first time with a New York long before his own or his parents', and by experimenting once again with the techniques of historical fable.

Most of the action transpires in 1871, but the book is actually a reminiscence, spoken (not written) by an elderly ex-newspaperman just after the turn of the century—about the same time as *Ragtime*. McIlvaine (he never has cause to tell his given name) lives alone in an apartment on Gramercy Square. A lifelong bachelor and lapsed Scotch Presbyterian, he is regarded by his neighbors (or so he thinks) as a decent if sometimes disagreeable codger. His story is of a Manhattan that he thinks is nearly forgotten only thirty years after the fact, a Manhattan before telephones let alone telephone books, where the cops on patrol carry neither guns nor billy clubs, where Central Park is still a novelty—and where promenaders take in the sights (and in summertime the breezes) atop the Croton Distributing Reservoir at 42nd and Fifth, ignorant of the terrible transactions unfolding inside the walls beneath their feet.

But is McIlvaine really speaking that long ago? And is the New York that he recalls really so different from our own? Doctorow is up to his old tricks, evoking the atmosphere of another era but with eerie homologies to the present, creating Manhattan impressions that are at once historical and timeless. Aficionados of Old New York like to poke their friends and gesture to the pressed-tin ceilings and the patches of cobblestone that have cheated the wrecking balls and the jackhammers; Doctorow gestures to these things too. More subtly, he describes details and characters that could only have existed back then but that also emanate a weird familiarity—not least the central character in McIlvaine's story, the disinherited young freelancer Martin Pemberton, an ex-Columbia College student partial to wearing army surplus, who got his start as a writer with an undergraduate exposé of his wealthy father Augustus Pemberton's callous wartime profiteering. I think that I once knew this Martin Pemberton, or someone a lot like him, and he is very much alive. And this is what Doctorow seems to want his readers to think.

As I've said, the narrator McIlvaine is getting on in years, and he recites his memoir elliptically, with a self-awareness that is sometimes pained. He admits that his memory may slip now and then—although most of the factual slips are fairly minor, the sort of thing that only a historian would notice and only a pedant would find objectionable. He knows that some people will think that his story is crazy, which is enough to make any storyteller nervous; more to the point, he is uneasy because he thinks that his story rightfully belongs to his ex-protégé, Pemberton. Above all, he struggles, as all journalists and historians do, to lift a coherent narrative out of a random chronology—in this case, apparently, the one dark adventure in his life as a repressed city-desk reporter and editor.

The story has some arresting, graphic moments. There are effective descriptions of a Hudson Valley estate, of a scene inside an artist's studio, and of the view from the parapet of the waterworks, with the city falling back "before something that wasn't a city, a squared expanse of black water that was in fact the

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geometrical absence of a city." One gloomy afternoon on crowded Broadway (McIlvaine recounts this secondhand), Martin Pemberton spies an omnibus that he has seen before, carrying a cargo of sickly aged men, including one who looks like his deceased father; and amid lightning flashes, newsboys' cries, and the clattering of horse hooves, we race with the agitated young man up past Grace Church and Dead Man's Curve, and catch a frightening glimpse of Pemberton *père*'s hunched shoulders and "the wizened Augustan neck with its familiar wen." Later on, we are back at the waterworks, where it turns out that an amoralist, Dr. Sartorius, has been secretly keeping the old men alive by sucking vital fluids from the bodies of captive street kids, to the shuddering accompaniment of a giant orchestrion, a sort of primitive musical synthesizer. (There is plenty of Poe in McIlvaine's story, but there is also plenty of Vincent Price.)

Literary riddles, homages, and inside jokes abound. The shrewd and singularly unmetaphysical policeman who helps McIlvaine track down the Pembertons and Sartorius is named Edmund Donne. Sartorius's name recalls the horror film character of thirty-odd years ago, Dr. Sardonicus; it might also refer to Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*. McIlvaine remembers "the city's bard," Walt Whitman, whom he regards as "something of a fool in what he chose to sing about"; and when McIlvaine drinks whiskey with Donne at Pfaff's, Whitman's old hangout, he is put off by the callowness of the saloon's "raucous good humor"; yet Doctorow has McIlvaine quote some confessional Whitman lines near the start of the book, and then he has him imitate "A Song for Occupations" on the book's final page. Unless I am mistaken, McIlvaine lifts some details from the writings of the wonderful, once-celebrated Manhattan chronicler of the 1840s and early 1850s, George G. Foster. And like the failed poet Penfield in Doctorow's novel *Loon Lake*, McIlvaine is also fond of cribbing from . . . E.L. Doctorow: an occasional image, like puffs rippling on water; passages from the short story in *Lives of the Poets* that was the germ of this novel (nicely rendered here as a dream chapter); whole chunks from a Doctorow non-fiction essay about Old New York.

Beneath these diversions is a parable of unbridled capitalism, one (we are led to suppose) that might have as easily been set in the 1980s or 1990s as in the 1870s: the wealthy sacrifice their family legacies and pay millions to Sartorius in order to keep themselves alive; Sartorius, a monomaniac, feeds them the blood and glandular matter of the poor; the charming savages of the Tweed Ring, beset by scandals, cover everything up, hoping that they, too, might get a dose of Sartorius's elixir. Ambiguities surround Sartorius, the supreme methodical intellect, who is just as capable of providing enormous public goods as he is of ghoulishly serving the high and mighty. (Both Martin Pemberton and McIlvaine come to see something admirable in the man.) And the parable ends benignly, almost bathetically: Nature, helped along by some human detective work, defeats Sartorius's schemes; the Tweed Ring falls; Donne, Martin Pemberton, and McIlvaine retreat into domesticated lives and for the most part (we imagine) they live happily ever after, in the most boring sense of that term. But New York also lives on; and, Doctorow suggests, the city will regenerate its terrible energies and fixations, in ways that will match and even surpass the wildest dreams of the 1870s. Sartorius, one investigator remarks, "was a man ahead of his time." Which is to say, he was a man of *our* time.

Despite its shimmering verisimilitude, however, the novel has a diminishing, abstract quality. Doctorow's most deeply imagined characters are not the parable's main protagonists, but rather those who explore and describe it. Apart from Captain Donne, these characters are drawn from the city's critics, journalists, and artists: the young Martin Pemberton; his best friend, the painter Harry Wheelock; and of course McIlvaine. Sartorius, by contrast, is an idea, The Genius Who Goes Too Far. The old men who employ him are the living dead, their previous existence reduced to documents and clippings turned up by the investigators. The politicians, personified by Tweed, are de-

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scribed with the exactness of a Thomas Nast cartoon.

And then there is New York's unwashed citizenry. Doctorow conjures it up with a knowing dexterity, but then gives us crowd scenes straight out of a "sunshine-and-shadows" tourist book or a sentimental Victorian charity report: street rats, mutilated veterans, hopeless strikers, ragpickers on garbage scows, a legless Negro on a wheeled board—the victimized, begging, mostly mute masses. There is an obligatory Doctorow lowlife character, the hoodlum Knucks Geary, who is one of Donne's informers; and Doctorow populates his sidewalks with some colorful religious lunatics. (Again, the imagined past mirrors the present.) But if Knucks is rendered with historical precision, he comes across as a generic New York tough guy; and even the lunatics are predictable end-of-the-worlders, as flat as the sandwich boards that are slung across their shoulders.

Observing and reflecting on it all, Doctorow's reporters have a habit of lapsing into grand clichés, sometimes with an unmistakable mid-to-late-twentieth-century ring. Thus McIlvaine's musings on Tweed and his minions: "They were nothing if not absurd—ridiculous, simpleminded, stupid, self-aggrandizing. And murderous. All the qualities of men who prevail in our Republic." Or McIlvaine on his "hard" realist city, "going through the same kinds of affairs it goes through today," "a city of souls whose excitements have always been reportable, who have always been given to that nervous, vocal, exhausted but inexhaustible combat that defines a New Yorker, even if he has just yesterday walked off the boat."

The same holds true for the novel's underlying conceits about history. So long as Doctorow weaves his allusions across the decades, he sustains a mesmerizing cleverness. But then some character has to go and talk about history explicitly, as in a scene in which one of the medical investigators challenges some baleful comments by McIlvaine about Sartorius's brilliance.

> "I believe you're something of a historian. You remember the doctors' riots . . . when the mob chased those Columbia medical students and wanted to lynch them for dissecting cadavers in their anatomy classes?"
> "That was a hundred years ago."
> "You're not telling me we're that much further along, are you?"

How that last question thumps.

Through some turn in the zeitgeist, Doctorow has delivered *The Waterworks* at a moment when several novelists and other storytellers have taken up history, and when American historians, weary of academic conventions, are trying to reinvent historical narrative. Without question, Doctorow's earlier novels, especially *Ragtime*, have contributed to the trend. Moreover, by returning repeatedly to the city, and having now extended his reach to cover an entire century, Doctorow has become the most ambitious and intriguing modern literary fabulist that New York has yet inspired. His boyhood novels have advanced a line of New York writing that stretches back to Melville's *Pierre*; and his historical novels have opened what Alfred Kazin once called "the great trunk of forgotten time in New York in which" (Kazin added) "I, too, I thought, would someday find the source of my unrest."

Yet *The Waterworks* does not ponder the trunk's contents deeply enough. It is not that one turns to the story (or to any of Doctorow's fiction) looking for an accurate portrayal of the past—accurate, that is, in the narrow sense that a historian might mean, describing only what happened or could have happened at a particular time. Doctorow has already successfully fended off complaints about his tampering, and has made a good case for a heightened, mythic kind of accuracy that is true to his sense of the spirit of a time. Just as Balzac created a post-Revolutionary Paris that was not-quite-Paris, so Doctorow creates a not-quite-New York.

Still, in *The Waterworks* more than ever before, Doctorow assumes some of the historian's burden, which is to dramatize the moral, or political, or religious, or aesthetic, or philosophical problems of the past, but on the past's terms as well as on our own. Adding to his difficulty, he has tried to do so in an

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American metropolis that for at least a century and a half has been dedicated to the continual obliteration of its history—a city about which, as early as 1845, the aristocratic ex-mayor Philip Hone (whom McIlvaine must have encountered as a young reporter) wrote in his diary: "Overturn, overturn, overturn! is the maxim of New York. The very bones of our ancestors are not permitted to lie quiet a quarter of a century and one generation of men seem studious to remove all relics of those who precede them."

Failing in the historian's burden can turn even the best novelist into a historical tourist; whereas succeeding in it can elevate the work of less accomplished writers. Take, for example, Caleb Carr's current bestseller about Old New York, *The Alienist*—a book that is, in some obvious respects, inferior to *The Waterworks*. What makes Carr's effort so interesting, beneath its serial killer plot and its lavish antiquarian descriptions, are its conundrums about free will and determinism, refracted in a dozen different imaginary ways but true to the mental spirit of its time. Those conundrums have connections with how we think today, because they concern unresolved (one might even say timeless) questions about human frailty, certainty, and aspiration; and these connections illuminate the present. But Carr allows the connections to build by precisely framing his characters' dilemmas in their own intellectual idiom, the idiom of the 1890s.

The Waterworks offers readers all of the elements for this kind of operation: shocking problems of urban poverty; a new order of organized political plunder; the clash of science and revealed religion (and, in some quarters, their mutual accommodation); and more. Now and then, there is a taste of how these matters played themselves out in 1871, as when Doctorow offers up an Episcopal sermon about the blasphemies of natural science and of the emerging study of Biblical philology. But these passages are brief, and before long we are back to the parable, back to the collapsing of the past into the present, back to the musings of McIlvaine—who in his dotage seems all too often a thoroughly modern man.

The Waterworks certainly offers pleasures that surpass the rest of this season's run of the stories about Old New York and other American historical locales. In his artfully designed film *The Age of Innocence*, Martin Scorsese cannot avoid draining off much of Edith Wharton's wicked social commentary. Carr mars his entertaining thriller with clunky historical references, like the patter of a Gray Lines guide. As for us narrative historians, professorial self-consciousness about bucking academic expectations (analogous to but more distracting than McIlvaine's verbal tics) always threatens to get in the way of our stories and their meaning.

Doctorow easily avoids these sorts of traps. He creates an imaginary city of death on the cusp of modernity—gaslit and driven by

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reckless, obsessive ambition, a city where all that is holy is profaned. Through McIlvaine, he describes that city in a quirkily interesting voice, a voice that seems to have a great deal to say. But with its vaunting of the describers over the described, its overreliance on playing tricks with time, and its scary but, finally, unsurprising parable, that voice does not say as much as I had hoped it would, either about the present or about the past. □

Fred Block

CORPORATE POWER TODAY

LEAN AND MEAN: THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF CORPORATE POWER IN THE AGE OF FLEXIBILITY, by Bennett Harrison. Basic Books, 1994. 324 pp. $25.00.

One of the fault lines within political economy is between theorists of continuity and theorists of discontinuity. The former argue that current institutions are a continuation of the past with only superficial changes. The latter argue that big changes are occurring and that our conceptual frameworks need to be revised accordingly. This division does not align with a left-to-right political axis; there are conservative and radical versions of both theories. Radical theorists of continuity argue, for example, that despite the apparent changes in capitalism, it is still the same system of class oppression. In contrast, radical theorists of discontinuity argue that new circumstances provide opponents of capitalism with opportunities if they are willing to adopt new analyses and strategies.

Bennett Harrison has written a book that defies easy categorization: he combines both types of positions in a way that is sometimes illuminating and sometimes unsatisfying. *Lean and Mean: The Changing Landscape of Corporate Power in the Age of Flexibility* is primarily an analysis of the large corporation. The decline of such firms as IBM, General Motors, and Sears has led some commentators to suggest that the era of the giant corporation might be over. For example, Daniel Bell—one of the leading theorists of discontinuity—in "Downfall of the Business Giants" (*Dissent*, Summer 1993) argued that the giant bureaucratic firms are no longer able to compete successfully against smaller, more agile firms that are better able to take advantage of rapidly developing technologies. Although Bell does not suggest where this tendency might lead, others have concluded that the economy will soon consist of many small and medium-sized firms that are unable to exert the market power of the great corporate empires.

Harrison presents a powerful critique of this argument. He concedes that the more rigid large firms have declined, but he argues that giant, multinational firms are tightening their control over the world economy. For every IBM in decline, he suggests that there is a Microsoft or Intel in the ascendancy. He is scathingly critical of the widely quoted claims that small businesses create most of the new jobs in the United States. He demonstrates that the recent enthusiasm for "industrial districts" that are based on cooperation among small entrepreneurial firms has ignored the role that giant corporations often play in such regions. By looking at the famous industrial districts of Italy he provides persuasive evidence of control by large firms.

Although Harrison is contemptuous of theorists of discontinuity who imagine either a collapse of corporate power or some kind of "postindustrial" transformation of the economy, he does believe that the strategies of large corporations have changed to accommodate international competition. One aspect of this change is the turn to leanness—concentrating on a firm's most profitable lines, reducing the number of core employees, and greater reliance on contingent workers and subcontracting. The second aspect is the tendency for giant corporations to build strategic alliances with each other and with groups of smaller firms, including the firms that are the heroes of the industrial district story.

Harrison suggests that this corporate networking represents a new stage of capitalist development. This is precisely what one would expect from a theorist of discontinuity. But Harrison also insists that the largest corpora-

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tions continue to dominate the world economy; all that changes are the strategies they use to attain this domination.

Moreover, this "new stage" argument is further complicated by Harrison's repeated contrast between firms that choose the high road of networked capitalism and the low road. The high road involves long-term cooperative relations with suppliers and substantial investments in the training of the core work force. The low road is lean and mean; firms play suppliers off against each other and squeeze labor and training costs to the minimum. At this point, his argument joins that of others who have contrasted the short-term thinking of U.S. firms with the longer term thinking of corporations in Japan and the European Community.

As in his earlier books written with Barry Bluestone, *The Deindustrialization of America* and *The Great U-Turn*, Harrison emphasizes the destructive effect on workers and communities of the low-road strategy. And he notes with satisfaction that the once controversial claims that he and Bluestone made about growing income inequality in the United States are now accepted as true by most analysts.

Usually when political economists invoke a "new stage of capitalism," they are suggesting that there are certain phenomena that characterize the new stage. Harrison, however, is caught by his indecision between continuity and discontinuity. If he argues that the high road is the path of the future, then he would clearly be joining the theorists of discontinuity in suggesting that we are entering a kinder and gentler phase of capitalism. If he takes the opposite view and sees meanness as the wave of the future, then all of the talk about alliances and investing in employees would be reduced to a minor footnote. Instead, he waffles and offers no real analysis of which path will be taken in this new stage.

This inability to resolve the tension between continuity and discontinuity creates two additional problems. The first is a weak and contradictory set of policy recommendations. After spending much of the first half of the book criticizing scholars who view industrial districts based on small entrepreneurial firms as the wave of the future, Harrison ends up adopting many of their policy recommendations. Michael Piore and Charles Sabel, two admirers of industrial districts, have argued that regions should pursue economic development strategies that are independent of large corporations. In their view, efforts by local governments to raise employee skill levels, provide infrastructure, and encourage cooperation among small firms could stimulate job creation and economic growth. They argue that this is a promising alternative to the standard efforts of local governments to encourage large firms to build facilities in their localities with generous tax breaks and other perks. But after berating these authors for failing to understand that large corporations will inevitably play a critical role in these industrial districts, Harrison ends up embracing their choice of policies. If he were consistent in arguing that large firms are still dominant, he would see this alternative development strategy as utopian.

The second problem is that Harrison's framework does not allow him to analyze the political dynamics of this system. The strength of his account is the reminder that giant corporations continue to exert extraordinary power, but he fails to place this in the proper perspective. In the culture industry, for example, despite the fact that the technical means to make movies or produce books are widely diffused, a handful of giant corporations still dominate through their control over advertising and distribution.

Similarly, while the advances of microbreweries that produce high quality beers have been widely heralded, the beer industry continues to be dominated by three or four giant firms. This part of Harrison's argument is an important corrective to those of us who imagined that as the means of production became more widely diffused, the size of production units would fall.

Yet, Harrison misses the related point that in this era of alliance capitalism in which the technical means of production in many industries are widely diffused, even the largest corporations live with instability and insecurity. The contrast with the 1950s could not be sharper. Back then, firms such as U.S. Steel,

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General Motors, and AT&T were not only powerful but secure; new competitors faced overwhelming barriers to entry, and established competitors knew better than to push too hard. Today even the most successful firms are often unable to block new competitors, and the corporation's fate can hang on the quality of its most recent marketing decisions. A giant movie studio can find itself ruined by a string of box-office disasters. A firm such as Nike—which lacks any of its own production facilities—lives or dies by the quality of its advertising and the trendiness of its latest shoe design. Even Microsoft understands that a failure to stay ahead of the competition in developing the next generation of computer operating systems could destroy the firm.

The greater use of alliances and subcontracting is part of this story of increased vulnerability. Previously, high levels of vertical integration contributed to the power and security of the largest corporations. But now, when a large automobile firm subcontracts with dozens of technologically sophisticated smaller firms to keep up with competitive pressures, it is operating in a trickier environment. To be sure, Microsoft's feat of transforming itself in a few years from a tiny IBM subcontractor into its most powerful rival is highly unusual, but the story does point to the fluidity and uncertainty of these new arrangements.

The insecurity of even the largest corporations is shaping our political life. Firms that are under this kind of pressure simply cannot afford to take a long-term view. Even if their leaders know that more government spending on infrastructure and employee skills will ultimately benefit them, they see no choice but to fight for more corporate tax breaks and less government regulation. As Bill Clinton has learned in the battle over health care, very few corporate leaders can be relied on to advocate measures that will obviously contribute to greater efficiency in the long term.

Harrison's argument about the continuity of corporate power misses what is new in our situation and exaggerates the degree to which the global economy is subject to conscious control. At the beginning of the book, he writes:

> I am suggesting that the emerging global economy remains dominated by concentrated, powerful business enterprises. . . . Dressed in new costumes, and armed with techniques for combining control over capital allocation, technology, government relations, and the deployment of labor with a dramatic decentralization of the location of actual production, the world's largest companies, their allies, and their suppliers have found a way to remain at the center of the world stage.

With its theatrical metaphor the passage suggests not just that the large corporations are serious actors, but that they are producing and directing a coherent performance. The metaphor would be more accurate if it recognized that diverse corporate actors have usurped the stage without any sense of the nature of the production. The increased vulnerability of these performers has led them to improvise wildly—often at cross purposes. In fact, they are singing different songs.

The difficulty that Harrison has in being able to sort out the extent of continuity and discontinuity is not his problem alone. Much of our political and cultural rhetoric now centers on questions of continuity or discontinuity—think of Ronald Reagan's invocations of cultural nostalgia or Bill Clinton's claim to be a "New Democrat." Amid this "imagined continuity" and "imagined discontinuity," nothing is harder than to define what is really new in our current circumstances. The value of Harrison's book is that his confusion forces us to think very seriously about this issue of continuity and discontinuity. In trying to figure this out, we will be able to make good use of the evidence that Harrison has amassed on both sides of the question. □

Maurice Isserman

HARDHATS AND LONGHAIRS

THE NEW LEFT AND LABOR IN THE 1960s, by Peter B. Levy. University of Illinois Press, 1994. 291 pp. $49.95, cloth; $16.95, paper.

In May 1970, as a college student in Portland, Oregon, I took part in the national campus strike protesting the U.S. invasion of Cambo-

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dia and the killing of four students at Kent State University by the Ohio National Guard. Every day for a week, several thousand students set off on antiwar demonstrations through downtown Portland. One morning our march took a different route, out to the port of Portland to bring our antiwar message to the longshoremen who worked on the waterfront. We knew that Harry Bridges's ILWU was a "good union," which was to say antiwar. We also knew that the longshore union had a radical past; though few of us qualified as knowledgeable students of labor history, leftist folklore in Portland had preserved some memory of the dramatic events of the 1934 waterfront strike. And we also remembered what happened in Paris, just two years earlier, when workers had joined students in common cause and in so doing almost toppled the French government. With high hopes, good spirits, and vaguely insurrectionary intentions, we set off to link up with our brothers on the docks.

Needless to say, the revolution didn't start that day in Portland. The longshoremen stayed at their jobs. But they were not unfriendly as we marched past, shouting, "Join us!" and waving our banners. As I recall, many more dockworkers flashed us V-signs (and even a few fists clenched in solidarity) than gave us the finger.

A little more than a half year later a much smaller group of students set off on yet another march through downtown Portland, this time protesting the U.S.-sponsored South Vietnamese invasion of Laos. We were in a grimmer mood than in the previous May, bundled against the February cold, feeling isolated, and all but despairing of stopping the endless war. Passing a building site, we suddenly found ourselves the target of a group of construction workers who jeered and tossed chunks of concrete at our ranks—perhaps provoked by the Viet Cong flags that some of us carried. We dodged the missiles and shouted, "Fuck you 'Joe!' " in response—the insult borrowed from a popular 1970 movie in which Joe, the title character, was a beer-swilling dese-dem-and-dose welder who harbored a murderous rage against hippies. I still wince at the memory of that miserable winter day.

Two moments in the history of the New Left, two conflicting realities: which more accurately represented the relations between protesting students and American workers in the sixties and early seventies?

Peter B. Levy's *The New Left and Labor in the 1960s* allows us to address that question with greater assurance. "One of the most enduring images of the 1960s," Levy notes in his preface, "is that of construction workers assaulting anti-war demonstrators." When flag-bearing workers beat up a group of students in lower Manhattan in May 1970, the "hardhats" were instantly enshrined in political myth, symbols of unthinking authoritarianism to the left, and of rugged patriotism to the right. But Levy, a young labor historian at York College of Pennsylvania, challenges the notion that "the New Left and labor, or more grossly the youth movement and 'middle America,' were adversaries and adversaries alone."

Like so many clichéd images of the 1960s (for example, bare-chested protester giving the finger to police at Chicago '68 = antiwar movement), the hardhat myth obscures a more complex reality. "In some ways," as Levy provocatively notes, "the New Left was a child of organized labor." Of course, most New Left activists, especially in the early 1960s, were middle-class students attending good colleges and universities. And, of course, they were influenced by thinkers like C. Wright Mills, who urged young radicals to abandon the "labor metaphysic" central to the revolutionary project of "Victorian Marxism." Nonetheless, at the start of the decade New Leftists were tied by family tradition, conviction, and shared political interest to the labor movement.

Some were literally the children of the labor movement. Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) founder Al Haber was the son of a professional labor arbitrator with close ties to the Michigan labor movement. Sharon Jeffrey and Barry Bluestone, significant figures in early SDS, were children of prominent United Auto Workers (UAW) leaders. And many other SDSers were "red diaper babies," whose parents had been involved in union organizing drives in the 1930s—and might still have been

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if the labor movement hadn't purged the communists in the late 1940s.

SDS itself was the organizational child of the labor movement, the youth affiliate of the League for Industrial Democracy (LID), a group with strong ties to the social democratic tradition and needle trade unionism. The relations between SDS and LID were, rather famously, fraught with tensions (SDSers tending to be insufficiently anticommunist for their elders' taste). Nevertheless, the LID connection made early SDS the beneficiary of significant union patronage. UAW funding put Al Haber on the SDS payroll as its sole staff member in 1960; several years later a UAW grant allowed SDS to launch community-organizing projects in the slums of Newark, Chicago, Cleveland, and other northern cities. SDS's founding manifesto, the "Port Huron Statement," was written at a UAW retreat center on Lake Michigan. While showing the influence of its principal author Tom Hayden's reading of C. Wright Mills, and including some criticisms of labor movement attitudes and practices, the Port Huron statement also urged students to "overcome their ignorance, and even vague hostility, for what they see as 'middle class labor' bureaucrats." LID leaders cast a jaundiced eye on the Port Huron Statement, but it didn't seem to trouble others in the labor movement. Walter Reuther, who hoped that the New Left would prove an ally in nudging the Democratic party leftward, soon afterward anointed SDS "the vanguard student organization dedicated to the forces of progress in America." The UAW, the Packinghouse Workers, and other unions also provided important political and financial support for the southern civil rights movement, including the Freedom Summer Project of 1964, which proved a formative event for many New Left activists.

Why, then, were construction workers a half dozen years later pelting me with concrete—and why was I, at least verbally, responding in kind? Levy argues that there was nothing foreordained about that outcome. Had it not been for the Vietnam War, and one or two other contingent variables, the tentative New Left-labor alliance of the early 1960s might well have continued and prospered. As Irving Howe once mused, in a speculative passage cited by Levy, had there been no war in Vietnam the New Left would have certainly grown at a slower rate; at the same time, it might have enjoyed a better chance of finding "a path to a democratic radicalism suitable to the American temper."

That was not to be. SDSers willing to go "part of the way with LBJ" in 1964 parted company decisively with the administration in early 1965 in response to Johnson's escalation of the Vietnam War. Most union leaders, out of anticommunist conviction, out of support for Johnson's domestic agenda, and out of reluctance to sever useful lines to the White House, initially supported the war. Some, like George Meany, remained hard-line hawks throughout the conflict, and lambasted critics of the war as cowards and traitors.

The war and the generational conflict came home to UAW leaders in the spring of 1967 when the Reuther, Bluestone, and Woodcock families gathered together for a Passover seder. In a pointed contribution to the evening's ceremony, Levy recounts, "Barry Bluestone and Leslie Woodcock, the children of Irving Bluestone and Leonard Woodcock . . . read speeches by Martin Luther King, Jr., and anti-war poetry from the World War I era." Though Walter Reuther was by no means as enthusiastic a hawk as George Meany, he felt compelled to respond to the younger generation's implied criticism. Reuther argued that the UAW could not afford to break with the Johnson administration while preparing for contract negotiations with the auto companies. According to Levy:

> Leslie Woodcock fumed as Reuther completed his astatement. Finally she could not rein in her anger any longer. "You've said it! You've finally said it!" Reuther asked what she meant. "For fifty cents an hour extra in the pay envelope," she exploded, "you'll let thousands of Vietnamese and Americans die in the war."

Many in the New Left concluded that the trade unions were just another brick in the wall of the establishment. Intellectually such ideas

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drew on the "corporate liberal" interpretation of American history promoted by such New Left historians as Ronald Radosh, who cast liberal reformers and labor leaders in the pure-and-simple role of loyal defenders of the status quo. The explosive issue of black power not only dampened the enthusiasm of union leaders for civil rights, it led to direct confrontations between such organizations as the all-black Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) in Detroit and the UAW. The countercultural life-style embraced by many young activists also deepened the divisions between the New Left and the labor movement.

But Levy argues that the disputes between labor and the New Left, for all the bitterness they engendered, were still in a sense family fights. And some of the relatives remained on speaking terms. Unions like the west coast longshoremen, the United Electrical Workers, and Local 1199 had opposed the war from the beginning. The UAW would turn against it by the end of the decade. At the same time, veterans of early SDS like Steve Max and Paul Booth remained convinced of the importance of maintaining ties with the union movement. Even at the height of its antiwar fury, the New Left as a whole remained supportive of selected labor struggles, especially those fought by minority workers like the United Farm Workers' campaign in California. By the early 1970s, New Leftists were turning out on picket lines to support striking auto, electrical and postal workers. Meanwhile, a generation of younger labor historians cut their scholarly teeth in New Left journals like *Radical America*, promoting a "history from the bottom up" of working-class struggles that in time eroded the influence of the "corporate liberal" synthesis of American history. The pro-working-class sentiment of the late New Left was shot through with revolutionary romanticism; Levy notes drily that "those who continued to probe the labor question . . . shared a certain unrealistic view of their times with the most starry-eyed radicals of SDS." But much the same could be said of several generations of young socialists from the 1930s on, who grew up to become stalwart trade union leaders or pro-labor intellectuals (the founders of *Dissent* come to mind as prime examples). Levy concludes that the 1960s were thus not simply an era

> characterized by a move from the idealism of the Port Huron Statement to the madness of the Weathermen. It was not one in which the New Left and labor, or students and middle class America, were solely confrontational. Nor was it a time when American youths came to hate their country and their fellow countrymen. Some did but many others did not, as demonstrated by the willingness of large segments of the New Left to reconcile their differences with segments of labor in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Levy's thesis has broad historical implications, beyond the specialized focus of his book. In a thoughtful appendix, he argues that historians of the 1960s need to pay more attention to both human agency and historical accident. There was no reason to assume at the start of the decade that in six or seven years' time the elder and younger Reuthers, Bluestones, and Woodcocks would be unable to sit down to a peaceful dinner together, either literally or figuratively. To say that things went drastically wrong between the New Left and labor in the 1960s is to recognize the possibility that things could have gone right.

Although I'm sympathetic to that position, I'm not as convinced as Levy that the emergence of such divisive issues as the counterculture and black power were, like Vietnam, a chance throw of the historical dice. Throughout the decade young white and black activists, inspired by a sense of generational mission, also shared a mood of cultural disaffection. New Leftists and civil rights activists were inclined to look for constituencies on the margins of American society, people presumably uncorrupted by conformist, materialist conditioning; thus sharecroppers were always more likely than steelworkers to engage their sympathies. When mainstream institutions like the Democratic party and the labor movement failed to respond (or to respond quickly enough) to the morally charged expectations of the civil rights and antiwar movements, it proved all too easy for

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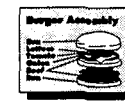
some in those movements to switch from redemptive idealism ("Join us!") to punitive nihilism ("Fuck you 'Joe'!")

But inclination is not inevitability. Levy is right to insist on the varying historical possibilities embedded in the 1960s. His book brings us another step closer to understanding the decade as the historical tragedy it really represented, rather than just a lockstep procession toward confrontation, chaos, and caricature. □

OF NOTE

Our readers will be interested to know that Irving Howe's *A Critic's Notebook*, edited and with an introduction by Nicholas Howe, has just been published by Harcourt Brace. The book is a collection of short essays on diverse literary subjects, many of which have never before appeared in print. The pieces range in tone from the serious to the playful; readers will find them a source of instruction and delight.—EDS. □

postmodern icons explained



If you've ever mused over the sociological significance of Madonna's underwear-outerwear dilemma, the deconstruction of a Big Mac, or the *Zeitgeist* of MTV, we have a suggestion to make: *click on the next button.*

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Off Base on PC

Editors:

It is true, as Dennis Wrong wrote ("*PR* on PC" Spring 1994) that political correctness has been widely discredited and often ridiculed (though it is significant that this happens far more often outside than inside academia). However, the fact remains that these critiques had little practical impact: the general notion of PC may be discredited, but most of its specifics survive, are deeply entrenched, and continue to have a considerable impact on academic discourse.

It is characteristic that even if the "water buffalo" incident became a joke, a recent report of the relevant committee at the University of Pennsylvania still defended the original procedures against the student who used the term. Even if few defend Leonard Jeffries, he is back in his job and continues doing what he has done before. The same applies to his comrades at Wellesley or Howard. Groups of students can still occupy academic buildings with impunity if such actions are sanctified by the rhetoric of PC.

The most damaging aspect of PC may not be the speech codes and the associated harassment of particular students or teachers. PC above all is a climate of opinion, an atmosphere of conformity, which greatly restricts free expression. The influence of PC on campuses means, for instance, that ethnically segregated dormitories will not be publicly criticized (but even if criticized they will not be disbanded), that few academics would publicly express doubt about any aspect of racial, ethnic, or sex preferences in admission, financial aid, hiring, and so on, about the intellectual merit of much of what goes under multiculturalism, about certain definitions of what constitutes sexual harassment etc., etc. PC also means that politically incorrect outside speakers are rarely invited to the campuses, and that when they are, they can be disrupted with impunity.

While it may be true that bemoaning PC to an audience of the converted will not have a great impact on the phenomenon, claiming that it has been relegated to disrepute and insignificance strikes me as even less helpful as well as misleading.

PAUL HOLLANDER
Amherst, Mass.

Dennis Wrong Replies:

Though his target is the lesser one of mere opinion or at most questionable administrative policies in some universities, Paul Hollander increasingly reminds me of J. Edgar Hoover continuing to insist that the Communist party was a major threat long after it had become a declining political sect. I recently remarked to a friend who also teaches in New York City and was a contributor to the *Partisan Review* symposium I reviewed that my university seemed largely untouched by the PC phenomenon. He replied that this was true of his institution too, but it was because New York City was a unique environment—things were different at places like Wesleyan. Maybe so, maybe we New Yorkers (though I live in central New Jersey) underestimate how grim it is out there in the academic boondocks of central Connecticut and western Massachusetts. Yet most of the *PR* symposiasts were professors, and the journal most read by academics, the *New York Review of Books*, has been resolutely anti-PC.

American colleges and universities are so heterogeneous that one cannot generalize about them. This was a conclusion of the Lazarsfeld-Thielens study *The Academic Mind* thirty-six years ago, which investigated another "climate of opinion, atmosphere of conformity" allegedly "greatly restrict[ing] free expression," namely, McCarthyism. Hollander lumps Wellesley and Howard, two utterly unlike schools, together because they have both experienced controversies over black anti-Semitism. I wish he were more specific about just where *in recent years* students have occupied academic buildings and disrupted politically incorrect speakers "with impunity." Could he be thinking of Khalid Muhammad, whose campus speech in my area caused a furor that led both to invitations and cancellations at other campuses?

Nearly all of Hollander's examples of PC survivals refer to black demands and protests. I submit that embarrassment over the failure of well-intentioned efforts at racial integration rather than intimidation accounts for the silence—insofar as it exists—in face of these demands and protests. Black students opted for racially segregated dorms. Would Hollander enforce integration by a policy equivalent of compulsory busing?

At least we agree that endless "bemoaning PC to an audience of the converted" is futile. But Hollander ignores my expressed approval of liberal critics of PC who do not observe a double standard in that they also condemn ritualized right-wing obsessions with the subject. Hollander, I'm sorry to say, has become just such a Johnny One Note in the right-wing press.

Incidentally, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* of June 29 reports that the University of Pennsylvania has changed its procedures in response to criticism over the "water buffalo" incident. □

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More on "The Question"

Editors:

It was nauseating to read Eugene Genovese's whining effort to dilute his guilt as a past apologist for the crimes of Stalinism by blaming the entire left, including the anticommunist left ("The Question," *Dissent*, Summer 1994). It was *almost* enough to make me wish I had voted in 1965 for the Republican candidate for governor of New Jersey who promised to fire Genovese from the State University!

Seriously, this is one more reminder of the late Irving Howe's observation that he had seldom been attacked from the left by anyone who did not wind up attacking him from the right.

THOMAS SPENCER HOLMAN
Clifton, N.J.

Editors:

Eugene Genovese's diatribe in your last issue is not the only place in which I have recently seen the anticommunist left blamed for the crimes of its Stalinist enemies. But the mangling of this history in *Dissent*, of all places, cannot pass uncontroverted.

Who is the "we" whose "collective dirty linen" Genovese wants to wash? Is it Eugene Victor Debs and the committee of protest against Lenin's prisons he joined in the *early 1920s*? Is it Norman Thomas and the Commission of Inquiry into Stalin's labor camps that he led in the late 1940s?

Over the last two years, many of the books published in the West in the 1950s and earlier about Soviet prison camps have passed through my hands. It is remarkable how many of them were written by socialists and trade unionists. In addition to the *Letters from Russian Prisons* published by Debs's committee, I can point to David Dallin and Boris Nicolaevsky's *Forced Labor in the Soviet Union* (1947), Al Herling's *The Soviet Slave Empire* (1951), and Paul Barton's *L'Institution concentrationnaire en Russie* (1959). Some of the material in this last book had earlier appeared in *Dissent*.

It is remarkable what a large share of the writings on this subject were written and distributed by the numerically tiny American left. How large this share was can be judged by examining the references to the 1963 edition of Merle Fainsod's standard work, *How Russia is Ruled*. Fainsod's chapter on "Terror as a System of Power" lacks some of the detail now known, but stands up remarkably well as a survey of the subject. Fainsod references only eight books (other than escapees' memoirs) whose primary subject is Soviet terror. Among the eight are the three works just mentioned—surely a higher proportion of socialists than in the American population at large, then or now.

As for my own answer to Genovese's "Question," the Fainsod book will do as well as anything. I took Professor Fainsod's course in my first semester of college, in 1967. What I was taught there about the crimes of communism did not disagree with what I had heard before at home and at school, or what I learned soon afterward as a member of the Young People's Socialist League and new reader of *Dissent*.

The point of this personal history is that democratic socialists should stop apologizing for our history on this question and start taking legitimate credit. We have undoubtedly been wrong on many things, but Stalinism was most emphatically not one of them. It was the left, primarily, that exposed Lenin's and Stalin's crimes. The McCarthys, Hoovers, and Nixons were more interested in exploiting the communist menace than in counteracting it.

The picture has not changed to this day, if we deign to consider current events rather than abstract political theory. Communist despotism remains in China. Who are its friends in American politics? Big business. Who are its opponents? Labor and the left.

Finally, one must wonder how the respondents to Genovese's challenge were chosen. Why were not Barton and Herling, both of whom are still available, asked to answer? Why not Harry Fleischman, another *Dissent* contributor, who in 1951 wrote the Voice of America's first broadcasts on Soviet prison camps? If their work is forgotten here, where will it be remembered?

BENJAMIN ROSS
Bethesda, Md.

Editors:

The American left must put an end to wasting its journal space with mea culpas such as the latest one initiated by Eugene Genovese.

Remember Genovese's famous "I do not fear a Vietcong victory, I welcome it!"? Now he lectures *Dissent* readers on the evils of communism and besmirches the socialist aesthetic. David Horowitz, Part Deux!

If Genovese wants others to seek penance, he should go to the *National Review*, *American Spectator*, *Human Events*, and *American Opinion*, among others and ask them, "What did you know and when did you know it?" about the following:

(1) the activities of the Dulles brothers and other reactionaries, both in business and government, before, during, and after World War II, specifically in collaborating with and protecting top Nazi leaders of Europe; (2) the American crimes in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Guatemala, Iran, Greece, and most of Latin America; (3) American atomic experiments on humans; (4) how American leaders borrowed from Nazis by creating local storm troopers and SS equivalents in Latin America, among other places, to prey upon their own people, killing priests and nuns at rates even Joe Stalin would have appreciated; (5) their continued sorry record on race, gender, and so on. *Dissent* readers have the credibility to attack PC, not conservatives!

Perhaps when Genovese sees Bill Buckley at one of those anti-PC gatherings, Genovese can question Buckley as to why he still defends Joe McCarthy and the Red Scare as he screams about the PC tendencies in some departments of some American universities. Maybe Genovese can get some support in fighting "EC," economic correctness, which pervades business and economics departments at most universities. Doubtful.

When contemplating the Popular Front, let's consider: during the Popular Front years, the New Deal had its greatest success. Conservatives have been most successful

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in using the religious right to create a reactionary Popular Front in the past twenty years. Conservatives rarely get called upon to repudiate more than a particular statement or two and are never hounded for their continued support of fascists here and abroad. (If John Kerry is a comsymp, then why isn't Bob Dole a fascsymp?.)

It's worth quoting Buckley at length from his infamous *McCarthy and his Enemies*, written with the odious L. Brent Bozell: "Whether [a McCarthy] speech was a conscious effort to narrow the limits of tolerable opinion so as to exclude left-wing Liberals, only McCarthy can say. . . . But it may well be we have not heard the last of this idea. Some day, the patience of America may at last be exhausted, and we will strike out against Liberals. . . . [We must] strive to free the conduct of the country's affairs from the influence of them and their works." (Buckley and Bozell say in a footnote that they only seek "social sanctions." Gee, thanks.) Page 333, Fourth printing, 1954. This is the true goal of this constant red-baiting and call for mea culpas.

Genovese should read Christopher Simpson's books *Blowback* and *The Splendid Blond Beast* to better understand why conservatives need some mea culpas of their own. The American cold warriors, both Democratic and Republican, have more to apologize for *in their actions* than many American communists who supported a distant dictatorship in the Soviet Union, but also fought for civil rights in America, better conditions for American workers, and fought against the abuses of an American National Security State. (Please do not take this as discounting the far more important actions of the noncommunist left!)

Dissent readers understand better than any conservative the crimes of communism. Conservatives are only against mass murder when it's done by Reds and only hate communism to the extent it provides public education, public health care, housing, and so on. If they were truly against murder, they wouldn't be cheerleaders for reactionary killers around the globe. Genovese, take your guilt elsewhere.

MITCHELL J. FREEDMAN
El Toro, Calif.

Editors:

"The Question" asked by Eugene D. Genovese may possibly be a rephrasing of a very important question indeed: why do good people so often believe in bad causes?

Marxism is a doctrine that many good people have supported. Neither Genovese nor the six respondents discuss the role played by Marx and Marxism in creating the evils in question. Robin D. G. Kelley talks about "Marxists"; Christine Stansell mentions that Genovese "habitually drew on Marxism"; Genovese himself says, "The horrors did not arise from perversions of radical ideology but from the ideology itself." None, however, considers the possibility that the crimes committed by Marxist regimes are inherent in the writings of Marx himself.

Moderates and conservatives as well as liberals and radicals have been gentle to Marx. *Commentary,* for example, an unambiguously anticommunist journal, has never printed a piece relating Marxist doctrine to communist cruelty. Not even *Dissent* has dissented from the universal hands-off policy toward Marx's writings.

Yet Marx was opposed to the concept of human rights and said so explicitly in his essay "On the Jewish Question": "None of the supposed rights of man, therefore, go beyond the egoistic man, man as he is, as a member of civil society; that is, an individual separated from the community, withdrawn into himself, wholly preoccupied with his private interest and acting in accordance with his private caprice." Furthermore, the belief that the history of humanity is the history of the class struggle permanently demonizes a portion of the human race.

GEORGE JOCHNOWITZ
Staten Island, N.Y. □

ED. NOTE: We will print more correspondence on "The Question" in our Winter issue.

Who Are Terrorists in Turkey?

Editors:

Although "With the Kurdish Guerrillas," by Aliza Marcus (Spring 1994) makes several important points that display the heinous aims of the terrorist PKK that are generally missed or ignored in the Western media, it still leaves the misperception that the PKK's terror campaign is widely supported by Turkey's Kurdish citizens.

Indeed, after pointing out that the PKK is responsible for killing "collaborators, a wide category that has included the wives and children of Kurds . . . schoolteachers, municipal workers, and outspoken dissenters," the reporter quotes an unidentified villager who says that the PKK is fighting for his rights. What else could he say, knowing that any opposition to the PKK would mean swift and brutal reprisals?

The fact remains that mainstream Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin support the government and oppose the PKK, its separatist goals, and its terrorist tactics. The March 27, 1994 local elections were not just a test of the will of the people in the Southeast Turkey but also a test of the strength of the PKK, specifically because the terror organization threatened those who did participate in the free elections with death. However, voter turnout in various cities in the region indicated that the citizens were simply not intimidated by the PKK's threats. For instance, in Diyarbakir voter turnout was 79.86 percent; in Hakkari, 89.40 percent, in Sirnak, 76.54 percent, etc. These results clearly prove that the PKK has no support from our citizens of Kurdish origin.

The Turkish government is not fighting the Kurds. It is combating the PKK, an outlawed organization listed in the U.S. State Department report *Patterns of Global Terrorism—1993* as one of the most brutal terrorist organizations throughout the world. As is readily admitted in your article, it presses children into its brutal terror campaign. It massacres innocent civilians without discrimination. It relies on terror to achieve its goals—killing teachers, judges, engineers who work for the good of the region. Its Marxist-Leninist ideology is bankrupt and disavowed by all

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free nations. Once those outside Turkey see the PKK for what it truly is, they will arrive at the same conclusion as the majority of Turkey's Kurdish citizens.

NUZHET KANDEMIR
Ambassador
Turkish Embassy
Washington, D.C.

Aliza Marcus Replies:

Ambassador Kandemir's letter is misleading. The central issue is Turkish government policies toward the Kurdish minority and reports of army abuses against Kurdish civilians living in the mainly Kurdish southeast. The PKK's methods may often be brutal, but in southeast Turkey, Kurds more often than not blame Ankara and its army for the primary abuses. More than eight hundred Kurdish villages have been forcibly evacuated by the army. Over the past few months, thousands of Kurds have fled to northern Iraq to escape what they say are attacks by the army. It is not so surprising that so many Kurds view the PKK as the only group fighting for their rights.

This is not as illogical as it may seem. Ankara continues to deal harshly with writers and politicians who dare discuss the country's Kurdish problem. Sociologist Ismail Beskci was sentenced in June to four years in prison for a book he wrote about the Kurds. An economist is serving a twenty-month sentence for a book about economic problems in the southeast. Recently, the former head of the Petroleum Workers Union was sentenced to twenty months in prison for an article he wrote about the Kurds. And those are just the best known of the lot.

Meanwhile, the pro-Kurdish Democracy party (DEP) was shut down by the constitutional court on June 16, on charges of separatist propaganda for two speeches by its former chairman and an appeal for peace in Turkey that the party published. Five of its deputies have been in prison since March, and could face the death penalty. Under these circumstances, it's no wonder that Ambassador Kandemir believes that "Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin support the government." Anyone who tries to say otherwise is liable to end up in prison.

The ambassador, like his government, is trying to reduce Kurdish grievances to a fight between terrorists (PKK) and the just (the Turkish army). In fact, the PKK's battle is largely an outgrowth of the grievances. Turkey could, for instance, legalize Kurdish-langauge education, television, and radio. It could end torture of detainees, halt the mysterious assassination of Kurdish activists, and stop soldiers from burning down Kurdish villages. The PKK is not the issue: even if the army wipes it out, the problem will still remain: do you give Kurds full rights, or do you insist that everyone is happy in Turkey and just imprison those who disagree?

As for his comments about the March local elections, the ambassador is correct to say that the PKK's call for a boycott was unsuccessful. It must be added that many foreign journalists who were in the southeast during the elections reported that state officials were threatening people to ensure that they voted. Still, Ambassador Kandemir raises an interesting point. A high turnout could also be a sign that Kurds in the southeast want their problems solved in a democratic fashion. But the question is, Will the Turkish government allow such a solution? □

To Letter Writers

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The Last Page

Forty years ago in *Dissent*, Irving Howe and Lewis Coser wrote: "To will the image of socialism is a constant struggle for definition."

Ever since then one of the distinguishing characteristics of *Dissent* has been that "struggle for definition." The legacy of Stalinism led the first generation of *Dissent* editors to wage a bitter fight to reclaim the values of socialism. This was a moral and political necessity. Having to fight this battle meant that little attention was given to the institutional arrangements and social structures that would make up a socialist society. But ultimately the case for socialism will rise or fall on such specific details.

In the last decade, no one did more to further this discussion than Alec Nove, who passed away in May.

Nove spent most of his scholarly life studying Soviet-style planned economies. Nove's books on the Soviet Union (*An Economic History of the USSR* and *The Soviet Economic System*) were translated into many languages and became standard texts. He also wrote numerous articles on Soviet society, economics, and law; critiques of conventional economics; and economic development. Of special interest is an essay on the economic mistakes of the Allende regime in Chile, an important, sobering statement on the difficulties of economic transformation.

In *The Economics of Feasible Socialism* Novee put to rest illusions that the market could ever be entirely replaced by a plan, and he showed that a variety of types of property and enterprise are essential to any conception of a democratic socialist society. He described an eclectic system with a core of nationalized industry and a conscious direction of major investment through parliamentary means. Cooperative forms of economic organization would be encouraged and small entrepreneurship welcomed. Private individuals would be free to own businesses. Competition and market incentives would guide the activities of the private sector; large-scale objectives and a recognition of social costs would guide the public sector. Income differences would exist, although differences not as extreme as those in America today.

Although others have developed alternative models, no one has matched Nove's for empirical detail, clarity, and common sense. Nove's work is, of course, not the last word on the subject. But his book did stimulate an important discussion that continues. (*Dissent's* contributions to that discussion have been collected in a book due out this fall, *Why Market Socialism? Voices from* Dissent, edited by Frank Roosevelt and David Belkin.)

In the last twelve years Nove became a friend of *Dissent*, appearing in our pages and speaking at a small conference we organized in New York. Although his association with us came late in his life Nove seemed to me very much "of" *Dissent*. He was as fierce a critic of laissez-faire economics as he was of the old Soviet model, which he saw as a monstrous perversion of the socialist idea.

For Howe and Coser, utopia had meaning only "if it is an image of social striving, tension, conflict." In *The Economics of Feasible Socialism*, Alec Nove outlined that kind of utopia. We honor his memory by attempting to build on his achievement.

MARK LEVINSON □

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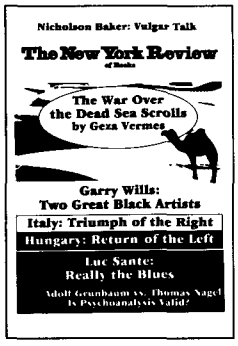
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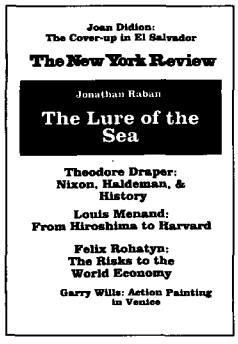
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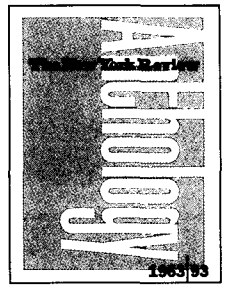

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